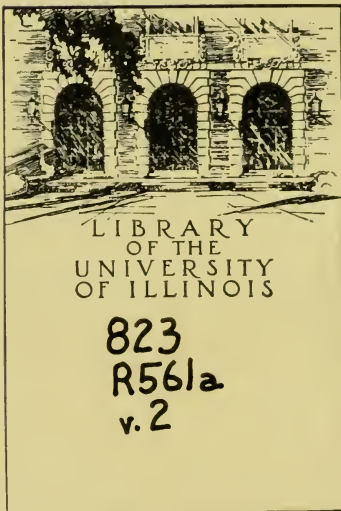



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1850.



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THE
ARMOURER'S DAUGHTER.

OR, THE
BORDER RIDERS.

A Nobel

IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

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THE
ARMOURER'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE RESCUE.

In vain his foes around him clung :
With matchless force aside he flung
Their boldest—as the bull, at bay
Tosses the ban-dogs from his way.
Through forty foes his path he made,
And safely gained the forest glade.

SCOTT,

ABOUT a couple of miles distant from the
Castle of Glanmorris, in a northward direc-
tion, stretched a wide and lonely heath,

skirted by copsewood and pines of stunted growth. The broken ground was occasionally interspersed with thickets of broom, and patches of furze, and here and there descended into dingles of brushwood. The spot was such as a single traveller might have been excused from traversing with hand on his weapon, and head behind his shoulder.

The sun had long since set when the company of Scottish Archers, with their captive, approached the common we have just described. The unlooked-for delay was caused by the Governor of Glanmorris deeming it more prudent that the convoy should not sally forth, until his own garrison had been strengthened by the arrival of the reinforcement from Ayton Castle. The Border Chief, from his solitary turret, had watched the decline of day with the most intense anxiety—at one moment his heart throbbed high with hope and expectation, and the next it sank in well-founded apprehension lest his young fol-

lower had failed in achieving the errand he had undertaken. The hour fixed for the removal of the prisoner was passed; he heard the sounds of bustle and active preparations below, but still he remained unsummoned in the desolate chamber. Each minute now seemed to him worth a year of life. At length the long expected troop marched into the court-yard—every archer was instantly in the saddle. Two soldiers of the guard went to seek the prisoner, and although he practised each subterfuge in his power to prolong the time, he was bade so peremptorily to descend without further tarrying, that he felt he could do no other save at the risk of exciting dangerous suspicions. The Borderer's arms were carefully pinioned beside him, and then he was assisted on horseback, with a guard on either side, and the warning that any attempt at escape would be the signal for instant death. Well pleased to be rid of so troublesome a charge, the governor briefly saluted the leader of the escort, and

the band rode from the castle at a quick but steady pace.

Darkness was gathering gradually over the face of the heavens—there was no moon—and it had become no easy matter to discern objects in the distance. Placed in the centre of his guards, the Chief contrived to preserve an aspect of passive indifference, while in reality both eye and ear were strained to the utmost, ready to profit by the slightest demonstration in his favor. A belt of trees, grouped by the roadside, the very place for an ambush, created a momentary feeling of expectation, but the troop passed along without molestation.

“Too nigh the castle,” thought the captive; “the tumult of an affray would challenge attention.”

A wild, uncultivated heath was now before them. The path here was so narrow, being obstructed by plots of furze, that two riders only could go abreast conveniently, however the archers managed to retain their position on either side the Bor-

derer, laying hold of his horse's bridle. The Chief cast one keen, earnest glance around him.

"These cords press me sorely," said he, impatiently, to one of his guards, "can they not be loosened somewhat?"

The man turned to see what relief could be administered with a due regard to the prisoner's safe keeping—at that moment up started, from a sudden hollow direct in their front, a body of horsemen, who dashed forward towards the company of archers with the speed of the wind. Startled as were the Scots at so unexpected a rencontre, they endeavoured to stand to their arms.

"Look to your prisoner," exclaimed the leader.

But the admonition came too late. The archers had lost all thought of their charge, and availing himself of their forgetfulness, he slipped from the saddle, dived under the horse's belly, and cautiously struggled to make his way to his own comrades.

“Dead or alive, see that the Heron escape not,” again shouted the captain of the escort. “Ha! yonder he skulks—behind that pollard.”

A volley of arrows flew in the direction of the tree. Fortunately for the Chief, the aim was taken at hazard. Plunging in the midst of his fearless Border-riders, now engaged hand to hand with their Scottish opponents, he found himself in comparative safety.

“Here, Lilburn,” cried he, “cut these villanous throngs, and lend me a sword, that I may make a thrust for freedom with my brave fellows.”

The Borderer's behest was instantly complied with. Brandishing his weapon aloft, he hurled an archer from his saddle, and leaped into the vacant seat. Uttering a shout of triumph, he cheered forward his followers, and rushed to the onset. The Scots made a tolerable resistance, but taken at unawares, they were at last obliged to give way, and commenced a slow retreat,

which was rapidly converted into a flight. The Chief foresaw that pursuit might lead into further difficulties, and promptly recalled his men.

"I would fain exchange a few more blows with the knaves," said an old Border-rider, shaking his head, as he looked ruefully after the flying troop. "It warms one's blood to have a brush after being so long cooped up in garrison."

"Heed them not, old comrade," returned John Heron. "The day of reckoning will come when you shall pay off old scores. Now we have other gear to mind. Ride close together, my lads, and press forward to the Heron's Haunt."

Maintaining a sharp look-out, the Border-riders wended their way towards the English frontier. Their horses, being tolerably knocked up with the night's work, they were obliged to proceed at a leisurely pace. Many a gay word and light laugh passed from one to the other ; but all was conducted in an under tone, for it did not

escape the recollection of any that they were passing through an enemy's country, where it would be unwise to call down observation. The lateness of the hour favored their evasion; moreover, the Scottish moss-troopers had principally retreated to their respective strongholds, or had obeyed the warlike summons of King James, and joined the camp at Edinburgh.

John Heron rode at the head of his band—not the least joyous there—well did he know the arts that won the faithful duty of his men; and while he entered into the humour of the moment, and discussed some gleesome jest with his followers, there was not one amongst them who did not deem his service well repaid. It was close upon midnight before they reached the Heron's Haunt.

Lights were gleaming in every direction, and every soul in the castle, not on actual duty, had assembled in the outer court to await the result of the expedition. The troop was galloping along

within a stone's throw of the gates of the fortress, when the Chief halted.

"Is not yon the figure of a man?" said he, leaning against that short-stemmed, broad-headed oak tree. "And hear you not a low moan? Who goes there? Speak, or I may send an arrow through your doublet! Yield yourself, and no harm shall befall you."

To these words of doubtful encouragement, there was no reply; but the dark object moved slowly forward, until it stopped in front of the Borderer's horse.

"Who are you?" demanded the latter. "What seek you? If you come hither to peer into our defences, or take account of our Marches and outlying, you had better have slit off your own ears ere you had moved a foot on such an errand!"

"Honourable sir, I am old, too old to make war a trade," returned the stranger; and his tremulous voice and bowed frame appeared, at least, to confirm this portion of his tale. "A personal concern that

can offend no man, brings me to the spot. I am solicitous to know if Master Nicholas Hatherton——”

“Now, I bethink me,” interrupted Lilburn, “this same lying varlet was whining at the side postern some days ago, —speering after the dead man while the breath of life was scarce out of his body. He had his answer then. Why comes he cringing back with the same report of himself? Beshrew me! but I believe him to be an arrant spy, who craved admission that he might note what force was in the castle; but he gained not his ends with me. I would fling a noose round his neck, and leave him dangling to yonder branch as a warning to others of his craft.”

“Hearken not to him,” exclaimed the accused, wringing his hands. “The blood-thirsty cut-throat, has no warrant for what he says. May it please your worship.”

“Worship not me,” replied the Chief,

sternly. "Keep your reverence for better men. If you would save your wretched life, tell us plainly with what intent you are found lurking before our gates at dead of night."

"I will speak nought but the truth, valiant soldier," said the old man. "No purpose of evil have I to you or your possessions. I lingered here that I might make inquiry if one Nicholas Hatherton—"

"We cannot stand to hold further parley," interrupted the Borderer. "One of you bring him along with us into the castle, there he can be examined at leisure. Whoever he may be, a comfortable lodgment for the night—a rousing fire, and plentiful supper, can do him no great hurt. Handle him not over roughly."

The old man uttered a loud cry, as one of the Border-riders, having dismounted, impelled him forcibly forward—however, soon discovering that no personal harm was intended, he submitted to the propelling power without further resistance.

It was a proud moment for the Border Chief, when he stood once more in his castle hall, surrounded by his devoted adherents, and listening to their loving greetings. All pressed round him with loud-tongued gratulations; some grasped his hand—others, less fortunate, struggled for a word or look of recognition. The Borderer's eye glistened as he surveyed the faithful throng, and he raised his hand to command silence—his bidding was promptly obeyed.

“My brave lads,” said he, “I have this night been rescued from certain death by the gallant daring of some of the band—why do I speak of some? Are ye not all of one heart? Every man who would have volunteered to ride on this dangerous expedition, has the thanks of John Heron—and as I see round me none but tried friends, who have stood beside me in many a deadly fray, I feel that there is no man here who would have shrunk from the service. All then have an equal claim to my gratitude. You may not perchance have heard that

open war has been proclaimed with Scotland. In peaceful times I have often withheld you from forays on our neighbours' borders, but now an inroad on these rieving Scots is lawful game. The debt we owe them for their intended courtesy to myself shall be discharged in full—vengeance may be wreaked, and booty may be won, while at the same time we serve the state, and fight in the cause of our liege King Henry. Now my friends, we will drain a cup to the glorious days that are coming, and then I will bid you good rest."

The Border-riders shouted lustily their plaudits, until the old rafters rang again. Gladly they hailed the prospect of resuming the predatory habits which the cessation of hostilities between the kingdoms had compelled them partly to abandon.

"Where is Starhed?" demanded the Chief.

Robin had stationed himself outside the circle; if he did not shun, at least, he would not court the observation of his leader.

The pride he would have felt, at any other period of his life, for the part he had enacted in the rescue, was totally overshadowed by the consciousness that if his murderous intentions towards the Warden had been known to John Heron, no private sense of obligation could have averted the weight of his displeasure, and he would have been thrust from the band, as a degraded outcast.

Although he did not cherish the slightest shade of remorse on account of the culpability of the deed, he did nevertheless entertain some touch of shame and compunction for having committed an act, which had drawn peril on, and would (if revealed) awake the wrath of his Chief, the only power in heaven or earth to whom Robin's unruly spirit held itself accountable.

The crowd readily separated to permit Starhed's approach. The boy's cheek was singularly pale, however, his hardy frame evinced no other token of the extraordinary fatigue he had undergone.

The Borderer advanced to meet him—while he uttered words of praise, mingled with expressions of kindness, the youth hung his head, and made no reply—attributing his unusual want of animation to the languor consequent on his recent exertions, John Heron commended him to his couch.

The rest gathered eagerly to the supper board, where, although the Chief shortly retired, the song and tale went round, and the wassail was prolonged, until the dawn ushered in a new day.

CHAPTER II.

THE INTERVIEW.

The cheerless convent cell
Was not, sweet maiden, made for thee ;
Go thou where thy vocation free,
On happier fortunes fell.

SCOTT.

IF Viola had not been among the first to welcome the Borderer after his rescue from so perilous a captivity, it must not be concluded that she was indifferent to his safety—maiden diffidence had held her

aloof, or, notwithstanding her own recent affliction, she would not have hesitated by any means in her power to testify her interest in her deliverer. She had occasionally reproached herself for her former deficiency of consideration for his feelings, and was solicitous not to repeat her offence. The blow, that threatened her peace, had fallen—her only parent was reft from her, and while she mourned him heartily and unceasingly, she was less self-absorbed than when his wounded state demanded her unremitting care.

“The Heron must not misjudge me,” thought Viola, “he must not deem me ungrateful that I kept myself apart yesternight, when all others gathered round to wish him joy ; he will comprehend that I am sad and suffering, without earthly protection, and could not thrust myself before the prying eyes and bold looks of his retainers—I will bid Janet take him a message—nay ! I will seek him betimes on the plat-

form, and he shall learn from my own lips that I rejoice in his escape."

So mused the maiden, as she flung open the lattice of her turret chamber, and leaned forward to inhale the fresh breath of a fair spring morning. Then her mind wandered back, far back to her happy girlhood when the armourer of Saint Evert practised his busy craft, and his young apprentice, Perkin Warbeck, was her own permitted companion in many a pleasant excursion ; she thought of his abrupt departure, so sudden and mysterious—what did it signify ! and the dark priest who brought his farewell, which the youth did not find it worth while to deliver himself—'twas an unkind severance from his early friends—and as she viewed the past, a faint sigh, that was not for her father's memory, parted the maiden's rosy lips.

The apartment appropriated to Viola's use, did not lack a certain air of comfort, although the circumstances had not allowed

any attempt at decoration ; the floor was spread with rushes, the bare walls were covered with ancient tapestry which fell to the ground in voluminous folds, and the view from the casement was such as was well calculated to win the mind from melancholy retrospection to a cheerful sympathy with the beauties of nature.

The morning was not far advanced when the Borderer sent to beg admission to his fair guest. A ready assent was given, and he directed his steps to her chamber. Albeit he was a man more accustomed to deal with battle-axe and coat of mail than woman's witcheries, the image of Viola Hatherton, as she rebuked his despondency, had often flitted across his recollection, and the impression was far from unpleasing.

With a gentle hand he threw open the door—Viola hurriedly advanced to meet him—and then he inwardly acknowledged that his memory had done her injustice. Tears for her father's loss yet glistened on her cheek, and the traces of her grief alone

served to link her seraph beauty with this world of care and suffering.

“ Good morrow, and welcome, noble sir,” said the maiden, “ not the less welcome that you have encountered strange peril since we parted. Think not that I heard of your danger unmoved—noon and night have I wearied the saints with prayers for your safe deliverance.”

“ So fair an intercessor could not be denied, and I owe you thanks for your pious pains. But it is not of myself that I am here to speak ; I would rather ask how it fares with you.”

“ I have been sorely afflicted,” faltered Viola, “ and time only can reconcile me to my loss—I am alone upon the earth.”

“ Say not so, sweet mistress, when all who look on you must wish to befriend. Whatever your lot, my arm will be ever at your disposal.”

“ To you I have already been the cause of grievous and irreparable injury, which neither words nor tears can cancel. When

next I claim your aid, it will be to remove the burden from your roof."

"How mean you?" asked the Chief, quickly. "Has any here failed in respect? Have they dared, during my absence, to infringe on the observance I enjoined?"

"Believe it not," returned the maiden, "I have felt nought but kindness, heard only the accents of pity. The hearts of your Border band may be stern and ruthless in the field, but to a woman in distress they are of softer mould."

"Why then do you speak of leaving us so early?" demanded the Borderer. "Yet if such is your will, you are free to act, and I have no right to question your pleasure."

"I will tell you my thought in the matter," said Viola. "In the south of Yorkshire stands a convent whose lady abbess was formerly my father's honoured patroness—for the sake of ancient recollections she will receive me—thither will I wend—two days' journeying will bring me

to these holy shades, and there, with no one to regret me, far from the temptations of the world, will I spend the remainder of my days in penitence and prayer."

"I like not the scheme," exclaimed the Chief. "It is as though I uprooted a wildflower from the valley, and planted it beneath yon coping stone, and then marvelled that it should droop, and lose bloom and fragrance. 'Twere pity—" and he paused abruptly. "Your mother was from Italy," he continued in a softened tone. "Had she no kindred whose protection would avail you now?"

"I have never visited the land of her birth, and with her family I have never held intercourse, nor do I care to seek them now—they carry themselves over proudly, and look down on the armourer's daughter. My father was born among these hills, and in truth," she added, faintly smiling, "I feel I have much more of the old Border blood in my veins, than resemblance to my mother's kin."

The Borderer pondered for a few minutes with a troubled air.

“But you will not part from us yet, mistress Viola; after so grave a trouble, repose must shortly be needed to restore your shattered spirits.”

“Emboldened by past favors,” said the maiden, “I will tell you what I would ask—that you should speed me on my road to the convent of Saint Bride at your best convenience, or devise some means of journeying there under safe protection, for although I boasted but now of my Border lineage, your frontier license fills me with indescribable dread.”

The Chief took two or three hasty strides across the apartment, and then stopped opposite to Viola.

“I have formed a plan,” said he, “which seems to correspond with your wishes. The Castellan of Norham Castle has a broad manor in Yorkshire, nigh to the convent where you would seek a retreat; he purposes to send thither his fair dame and

infant heir, and I will make interest that you shall travel under their safe-guard."

"'Twill be indeed most opportune, and this last act of service will not be the least that you have rendered me."

"Stay and hear me to the end. It will be some weeks ere the Castellan's lady takes her departure."

Viola's countenance fell.

"But until that time comes," pursued the Borderer, "if you, young mistress, will be content to abide here under my faithful guardianship, I pledge you my honor that your privacy shall be sacred as a shrine, that no danger shall reach you, that does not first pierce through my mailed breast—John Heron never broke his pledged word to man, and foul shame were it that he should coin falsehood to a weak maiden, because her arm is powerless to avenge it. Will you trust me?"

Viola raised her soft eyes, and met his truthful glance; she perused his frank,

manly features for a moment before she replied in a low but firm tone:

"I will follow your counsel, and await at the Heron's Haunt, until the convoy you have named shall be ready to start."

That point being decided, the Borderer, with an evident air of satisfaction, quickly changed the theme. He recounted the particulars of his late adventure and hair-breadth escape, touching lightly on his own peril, and dwelling lengthily on the rare devotion of his young follower, Robin Starhed. His auditress listened to these descriptions with the most lively interest.

"We must then expect," she observed, "that sanguinary war, with its train of attendant evils, will shortly be raging in these peaceful districts. 'Tis a sad thought."

"By Saint Cuthbert! I must avow our regions can never boast of much tranquillity. What with feudal jars and personal enmities, and the depredations of lawless plunderers, conjoined to many an affray with our northern neighbours, it is always

safer to ride through our Border-land in armour of proof than a silk doublet."

"You draw a savage picture of the frontier territory, and I would fain disbelieve its likeness. But tell me, now that strife and bloodshed will be of daily committal, may not the Warden's most unhappy death be forgotten in some young tale?"

"Forgotten—never—as long as England exists, one page in her records will affix a dark stain to the name of John Heron. But the first bitterness is past, and I have before me the hope of serving King and country with such faithful zeal, that those who speak of my offence shall also have a host of gallant achievements to chronicle; and those who read, shall soothly swear there is some error in the narrative, for a brave man never could commit so foul a deed. My sword shall be my advocate."

And forgetful of the gentle presence in which he stood, the Borderer drew forth his shining blade, and leaned over it with a sparkling eye.

The maiden interrupted him not, but withdrew to the casement, and directed her gaze to the distant uplands. The movement roused the Chief from his contemplation, and starting up, he exclaimed—

“ I ask forgiveness for my oblivion, Mistress Viola. My rude castle has so seldom contained one fair and gentle as yourself, that I am scarcely worthy of the office I have claimed. However if you will pardon my rough bearing, you may rely on your warder in all matters that regard your safety. And now farewell ; my duties compel me to the ramparts, and I will summon Janet to sit with you awhile.”

Viola returned suitable acknowledgments for his well meant kindness, and the Borderer left his fair charge.

Her solitude did not long continue uninterrupted, and Janet, the miller's niece, promptly made her appearance.

About half a league from the Heron's Haunt stood the miller's humble tenement. He served the inmates of the fortress with

flour, and lived under the powerful protection of John Heron, who engaged to redress any injuries unlawfully inflicted on him, with the understanding that in case of siege, the miller and his two stout serving men should aid in defence of the castle, a condition not likely to be infringed, for if an enemy's force occupied the country, the fortress would be the only accessible place of security.

His niece had been trained to entertain a most solemn awe of the Border Chief, and listened therefore in reverential silence to his strict injunctions that she should omit no effort to cheer the orphan mourner, or contribute to her comfort. Certainly any recommendation on this head was not necessary, for her own warm heart and youthful sympathies would have naturally inclined her to so charitable a task.

The damsel's rosy, smiling face, and trim figure, were not set off to advantage by her dress, which was of the plainest possible description, for the miller liked not that

her comeliness should be a subject of remark to every roving lad in the country side; and as he intended to endow her with all his world's gear, he destined to marry her to an old friend of his own, a weaver at Carlisle, with thrifty habits, and well-filled purse. It yet remained to be discovered whether Janet would acquiesce in the decision, and consider the proposed inheritance a fair requital for exercising an absolute controul over her affections.

The miller could not forbid her attendance at the Castle on the present occasion, but he strictly enjoined her to keep a sedate, orderly behaviour, and not lend her ear to the profitless gossip of the idle soldiery.

The intercourse between Viola and her humble companion had already begotten mutual confidence.

“And did you tell the Chief,” enquired Janet, “of your wish to immure yourself for ever within the convent walls?”

"I did so, and further claimed his aid to protect me on the way to Saint Bride."

"What thought he of so pitiful a sacrifice?" asked the maid of the mill.

"In truth he seemed not to approve my plan, but that matters nought; he will not bar my freedom to choose my own course."

"For my part I could not bide his angry frown; if he were once to knit his brows on me, I should straightway do what he willed."

"And wed the old weaver of Carlisle?" demanded Viola, smilingly.

"Nay, that were martyrdom indeed. I had far liefer take the veil. It is more likely I should stab the old dotard with my bodkin, for he has not the courage of a wren. If ever he plays the wooer in earnest, and brings his frosty pate to the mill, I will play him a notable trick, depend upon it. But tell me, dear Viola, you cannot intention to leave the Heron's Haunt at present; dangerous times are at hand; and where else can you be equally secure?"

“It may be some weeks before the escort I am to join will depart. Meantime, I am too grateful for my present lodgment to seek to quit it.”

“That is glad news,” returned the damsel; “and when the first impression of your grief is worn away, you will begin to cherish other thoughts. Who can guess what honour and happiness fate may have in store. To my thinking, a real knight with golden spurs could not find a better bride.”

Viola did not reply, but drew from her bosom a ruby cross, which she always wore round her neck suspended to a marvellously fine chain. As she gazed silently on the relic, Janet perceived that her cheek was wet with tears.

CHAPTER III.

CROSSING THE BORDERS.

'Twas a fair sight, that arm'd array,
Winding through the deep vale their way ;
Helmet and breast-plate gleaming in gold,
Banners waving their crimson fold,
Like clouds of the day-break : hark to the peal
Of the war-cry, answered by clanging steel!

L. E. L.

KING JAMES, having completed his martial preparations with as little delay as the miscellaneous nature of his resources would

permit, set his gallant host in motion, and with tuck of drum and flying banners, commenced the march southward. The Adventurer accompanied him, full of high hope and a vague expectation that the name of York would create a rising in England, which should terminate in a change of dynasty.

Lady Katherine followed, in a litter, the movements of the army, closely guarded, tended with the utmost assiduity of zeal by all around her, and supplied with every comfort and even luxury that her position would possibly admit.

It was no unusual thing, in those days, for ladies of distinguished birth, and delicately nurtured, to attend the military expeditions of their kinsmen, exciting the chivalous to deeds of prowess and renown, and lending their personal assistance and chirurgical aid to the wounded. In our idea the feminine presence is misplaced in scenes of violence and bloodshed, but then it was considered otherwise, and constant to this self-

imposed duty, from the moment that she pledged her faith at the altar, the White Rose of Scotland never deserted her husband's side during any vicissitude of fortune.

The northern army having crossed the Borders, and obtained a footing on English ground, the standard of Richard of York was pitched, and he was proclaimed liege suzerain of the kingdom they had entered. The inhabitants of the neighbouring villages were exhorted to take up arms in support of their lawful monarch, and were promised immunity and protection if they would declare themselves the partizans of the house of York. In spite of every encouraging demonstration, the people, for the most part, held aloof, and those whom curiosity attracted to the spot, watched the proceedings with astonishment and distrust. The proclamation seemed to serve as a jest, and the cheers of the Adventurer's own followers were spiritless, for they could not avoid being deeply disappointed at the equivocal

manner in which their leader's claims were received. Their ill-success was mainly attributed, by them, to the appearance of the Scottish army—a most unpopular spectacle in English eyes, and one little calculated to attach them to the prince who had adopted such objectionable auxiliaries.

These representations being duly made to King James, he, nothing loth, separated from his young ally, and penetrated into Northumberland in an eastern direction, devastating the surrounding country, and taking possession of two or three fortified towns of small note, wherein he left a garrison in order that he might secure a safe retreat to his territories.

The Adventurer now found himself at the head of two thousand men only. Five hundred of these were Burgundians, in the pay of the Duchess of Burgundy, and commanded by the Count de Grival, a soldier of fortune, yet of established integrity; a man who sold his sword and services to the highest bidder in the first instance, but was

nevertheless, distinguished for his punctual adherence to his engagements, and inviolable fidelity in carrying out any undertaking to which he had bound himself. His troop was in the most perfect state of discipline, and ready to be hacked limb from limb at his bidding; alike was it to them, what foe they had to encounter, provided their pay was duly received. The body of English volunteers could not compare with the mercenaries in training and equipments; yet each individual man seemed in himself a host; they owned no other leader than Richard, and were chiefly in the flower of manhood; with gallant hearts and devoted enthusiasm, they were resolute to fight to the death in the cause they loved—the arms of some were nerved, moreover, by the injuries sustained from the line of Lancaster; others, in the heat of inexperienced youth, saw nought before them but victory and honour; and there were a few with whom the recollection of former benefits from the White Rose, outlived their season of

enjoyment, and outweighed the sense of present hazard. The more aged, perhaps, were influenced by the expectation that, at the appearance of a new claimant to the throne, every class of men in the country would rise with a list of grievances to be redressed; and then they judged it would be no difficult matter to divert the discontent of the applicants into a new channel, and make them endeavour to obtain by open rebellion, that which had been denied to humble petition. Many a secret well-wisher to the insurrection hung back, with a view to conceal their sentiments, until the enterprise assumed a more favorable aspect, nor did these prudent time-servers think they should lose preferment in a new order of things by delay—for it must be avowed, that the House of York, although it usually inspired an affection as undoubted as it was sincere, was not prominent for the discharge of debts of gratitude, and those who shed their blood in its

defence, were frequently set aside for the mere favorites of the hour.

Among those actuated by personal attachment to their leader, Maurice Vipont was conspicuous; his warm heart had been inalienably won by the Adventurer's kindly affability and marks of friendly confidence. His regard was naturally quickened by a feeling of reverence for the presumed misfortunes of a prince, whose infancy was supposed to be cradled in regal pomp, while his boyhood escaped, with difficulty, the assassin's grip. How far Vipont's sympathy was due, the reader, perhaps, may determine.

Master Dalton had soon expressed a wish to serve the common cause in some civil capacity, pleading bodily ailments as an excuse for shunning more active employment; and as he was an excellent scribe, the chief portion of the correspondence fell to his share of duty.

It may be supposed that, while others

were toiling in their different vocations, Father Hubert was not idle; he moved through the host with his noiseless step and quiet smile, encouraging the timid, elevating the spirits of the despondent, and fostering the hopes of the ambitious, without attracting observation to his pursuit; he was, in truth, the soul of the whole enterprise; the Burgundian mercenaries already regarded him with extreme respect, and whispered, one to the other, that the good priest knew more than was in his breviary, and when they came to hard blows, he would not be found in the rear.

When King James parted from Richard, he left behind him a part of the division brought into the field by the Earl of Huntly, under Sir Ronald Graham; this was done out of deference to the feelings of the royal kinswoman, Richard's bride, who thus found herself surrounded and guarded by the veterans to whom she had been known from her earliest years.

Lord Hamilton, at the head of a com-

pany of Scottish Archers, completed the number of the forces that remained with the Pretender.

It was doubtless irksome to Sir Ronald to be placed under the nominal Captainship of the Adventurer, but he would not voluntarily reject an office which brought him into daily contact with Lady Katherine, the idol of his boyish love; the rapture of beholding her unrivalled beauty, and listening sometimes to the accents of her silvery voice, could not be bought at too high a price.

Gradually as the intelligence of the rising in the north of England spread through the land, several Yorkists from the midland counties sped to the scene of action, proffered their homage, and added themselves to the adventurous band.

Emboldened by this augmentation, it was forthwith determined that the tents should be struck, and the small array should march slowly forward, issuing a proclamation as they went, announcing the rights of Rich-

ard to the crown, and advising all loyal subjects to assist in their support. In a further convocation of the Pretender's little council, it was agreed that the slightest gleam of success would prove a sure beacon to guide to their camp many a covert adherent who now kept aloof, and consequently it was deemed expedient to proceed to more warlike measures, and besiege some of the strongholds of the Border Chiefs, which would serve as places of refuge for their own wounded.

While King James was pursuing his victorious route, the army that was hastily being assembled by Henry VII. would naturally be directed against so formidable an antagonist, and therefore the Adventurer might reckon to remain unmolested for some time without sufficient force to oppose him. During that period it was hoped an accession of partisans would gather to his standard, and empower him to march straight on for London, without fear of receiving any check from an encounter with the enemy.

While these events were occurring on the Borders, it cannot be imagined that John Heron's vigilance slumbered. Previous to King James's incursion, the Bastard Heron had made many successful forays into Scotland, carrying off much spoil, and seizing several prisoners, whom he delivered into the charge of one or other of the Castellans who occupied the English royal fortresses.

The old man who, it will be remembered, was led to the Heron's Haunt under the suspicion of being a spy, still harboured there. The closest examination could elicit nothing farther than that his name was Osbeck, and he had come to seek the deceased armourer, in order to procure from him some information which concerned him nearly; his second visit, which induced the accusation of espionage, was occasioned by a doubt of the correctness of the report of Nicholas Hatherton's death, since he had formerly journeyed hundreds of miles owing to his having been misinformed on the same subject.

The poor old man was now only solicitous to return to Flanders, but entertained so lively an apprehension of being pillaged and slain on the road, that he gained permission to abide at the castle until the adjacent districts should assume a greater appearance of tranquillity; this was a privilege always accorded to the aged and infirm.

Father Paul had also proposed to depart, and requested the Chief to grant him an escort as far as Norham. The Borderer drew him on one side, and demanded if there were any urgent business in the wind that made his immediate departure necessary.

"None that I wot of," returned the jovial priest. "Those that need a service at my hand must not think to find me without special pains. I cannot be ever on the hill side like some wandering pedlar."

"True enough," replied John Heron; "and since you have no point of duty elsewhere, I would press you to continue in

our garrison for the present. There is the armourer's daughter—that poor orphan girl will find your presence a solace and protection. I am not often within the walls, and the bluff fashions of our troopers may well affright one of her gentle nature. A shaven crown wins confidence where a steel cap fills with dread.”

Thus appealed to, Father Paul consented to remain.

If the rough Border-riders seldom obtained a glimpse of Viola Hatherton, the miller's niece by no means maintained so rigid a seclusion; and frequently, when Giles Hurst was on duty, Janet ascended to the battlements in search of Father Paul, or some other inmate of the castle who was nowhere to be found.

On one of these occasions, Giles endeavoured to draw her into discourse by inquiring if she did not prefer a frontier life to being up in a dull town.

“How can I tell?” returned the damsel, “when I have never been to Carlisle,

save once, on a visit to my mother's cousin."

"'Twas then, the ancient weaver first set his squinting eyes on you," observed Hurst, —for Janet's engagement was no secret, as the miller proclaimed it everywhere, that all might understand his niece was already bespoken.

"Yes! and he is a desperate wooer. He swears I am the most precious piece of goods he has ever handled, and means to buy me outright.'

"But you, Janet, cannot listen to the hoary-headed hypocrite. I like not to hear his name coupled with yours."

"Yet he is not without his merits," remarked the miller's niece. "He has the head of a sage, and lots of experience; and then his money-bags. I should don a new kirtle every day, and have gauds and trinkets for the asking, and a palfrey with blue and silver housings down to the ground."

A muttered imprecation on the vaunted

money-bags, was the only response of the Border-rider.

“Still,” pursued the damsel, “he lacks one treasure that I covet—without which, the rest is worth nought.”

“What may that be?” demanded Giles Hurst, in an interested tone.

“The honest love of a true heart,” answered the maid of the mill, turning her rosy face full upon him.

“That, at least, a poor lad may have to offer,” exclaimed Giles, stretching forth his hand to detain her, but she eluded his grasp; and with a nod and smile, at the discomfited sentinel, tripped lightly away.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEACON.

Ere the ruddy sun be set,
Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,
Blade with clatt'ring buckler meet,
Hauberk crash, and helmet ring.

Weave the crimson web of war,
Let us go, and let us fly,
Where our friends the conflict share ;
Where they triumph, where they die.

GRAY.

ONE evening, as Viola stood watching the western sky from her turret casement, she

started with surprise as she beheld, in the extreme distance, a vast column of light shoot into the air, reddening the wide vault above. Could it be that a falling comet had dropped its fiery tail on the devoted earth? Even while the fanciful idea crossed her mind, she chanced to turn, and saw the same appearance in another direction—she continued to gaze in mute wonder—and at this moment, the Border Chief entered the apartment rather more abruptly than was his wont, and an unusual air of animation was depicted on his bold face. His hand grasped a scroll. Stern joy sat on his firm lip, and flashed from his sparkling eye.

“Marvel not, sweet mistress, that you see strange sights in the land,” said the Borderer, in answer to her mute glance of astonishment. “Yonder is the beacon-fire of war. You have yet to learn our Border ways. That blazing faggot, on every upland, tells us the Scots have crossed the Tweed,

and bids us look to our defences—the signal will be caught and repeated from post to post, until an hour hence, the good citizens of York will grow pale with fright as they hearken to the tale.”

“I must avow,” returned Viola, sadly; “I see no cause for the triumph you betray in every gesture—in the very tone of your voice. Is the destruction of human life of so small account that you reckon it a pleasant pastime for an idle hour?”

“Gentle maiden, you can ill sympathize with the impetuous feelings which rush like a torrent through my frame—the hour I have panted for draws near—the blood that will flow in honourable fight shall cleanse my sword of the assassin’s stain—I yet live to redeem and repair. You cannot guess the bitter shame that has rendered my nights sleepless—the clinging sense of dishonour that has made my days a burden—with these I have wrestled until I have been tempted to save the doomsman his odious task. Now in my triumphant hand I hold a

commission from King Henry, which charges me to man my castle and defend it against all comers for the space of six days; to keep the enemy at bay until my Liege's preparations for war are completed; at the end of that time succour is promised me; Heaven save the mark! I will hold out while one stone is left standing."

"If I conceive you aright, you expect we shall be besieged?" said Viola timidly—for she did not share her companion's rapture at the intelligence he imparted.

"It may be so. Still the honour may be diverted to some other post. The miserable impostor, who calls himself Richard of York, will scarcely dare to march onward, and leave any fortified places in his rear; besides, he will need a haven to fall back to—yet he may take some other course, and the opportunity of distinction I covet so much may escape me?"

"And you believe you can make effectual resistance?" demanded Viola.

"Doubt it not, fair mistress. For six days I will defend this fortress against a world in arms, and then we shall be relieved. For my own part, I have ever wooed danger for itself, and feel no remorse at the result of a strife wherein my own life is fairly staked; but dream not that I should wear so calm an aspect if I foresaw the remotest chance of peril to yourself. A few nights' slumber interrupted by the noisy sounds of our rude warfare will be, I trust, the only inconvenience you will incur."

"Nay, I have more spirit than you imagine," said Viola, with a slight touch of pride. "At least on my father's side I am English-born; when the hour of trial comes, you will not find that I lack fortitude to endure, and although causeless bloodshed seems sinful in my eyes, I would not have you shrink from encountering any risk which duty to your sovereign exacts."

"There spoke a true Border-maiden!" exclaimed the Chief; "but fear nothing; my followers are brave and true—we are

plentifully supplied with provisions—and your bright presence I esteem a happy augury. The success that has hitherto attended my arms will not fail me now. A free pardon for the past shall I win from my King, with thanks to boot, for present service, and then—”

He paused suddenly.

“What then?” asked the maiden carelessly, as she directed her calm, lustrous eyes to the blazing beacon.

A deep flush mounted even to the Chief's brow, and his passionate glance was bent upon the nymph-like form half leaning on the high-backed oaken settle.

At that moment Viola thought not of him—looked not on him—or the secret that trembled on his tongue would have been manifested at once. Small wonder was it that the natural loveliness and modest grace of his orphan charge had touched the Borderer's unpractised heart, which, rugged as it might seem, still beat tender and true beneath its coat of mail.

Skilled as the softer sex generally are in detecting the impression made by their charms, it must not be considered singular that Viola had not noted the growth of his attachment, since he had sedulously guarded it from observation; his high-wrought honour, and the instinctive delicacy of his manly nature had hitherto repressed any exhibition of his love for one cast defenceless on his protection. But the hour had arrived when he felt irresistibly impelled to speak; times were at hand when a lawful protector would be strongly needed by the object of his adoration; he knew it would not be in his power to conceal his passion much longer, and his brightening prospects seemed to warrant its assertion. There were moments when he doubted the favourable reception of his suit, and the idea occasioned him exquisite pain; but in all their intercourse Viola had shown herself so trustful, so winningly gentle, and had evinced so deep an interest in his fortunes, that in general his hopes far outweighed his

fears. Yet he wavered—for he entertained an extreme reluctance to alarm the idol of his love by an abrupt declaration of it, which might terminate the pleasant state of intimacy which had imperceptibly been established between them. He who had often turned the battle's swelling tide, trembled at the presence of one fair girl, and the bold heart of the Border Chief died within him as he thought that on one word from her ruby mouth hung his fate.

Still he spoke not—and surprised at meeting no reply, Viola repeated her question in a tone of greater curiosity.

Shaking off his irresolution, the Borderer sprang forward, and poured into her astonished ear his avowal of love and protestations of ardent affection.

“Think not, dear Viola,” he concluded, “that because I am rough of mood, and in all things unworthy to wed so gentle and lovely a bride, think not that in tender affection to yourself I will veil my claims to e'er a knight in the land. Give

me a right to protect, and my heart shall be evermore your bulwark, firm but not hard. Yield me that little hand, and its slightest movement shall guide me as you will. I may not requite the boon, but a life of unutterable devotion shall prove how dear I hold it."

Viola had been so startled by this unexpected appeal, that utterance seemed for the moment denied her, and she could only shake her head sadly in refutation of his suit.

"Do not reject me," exclaimed the Borderer with an earnestness of emotion that was touching from its very intensity. "You will not, cannot mean it. You will take time to reflect. Others may have a fairer lot to offer you—but to none else would you be what you would to me—the single object of worship to your lonely worshipper, the solitary star in a cloudy sky, the one hope whose possession seems to have grown into a very part of being."

"Stay!" faltered Viola. "I will hear no

more. I cannot accept your suit; and, believe me, I never dreamed that you proposed to urge it. About to vow myself to the service of heaven, it exceeds my power to make return. Nay! you have mistaken the nature of your feelings; I will not credit that the intercourse of these few weeks can have endangered your peace of mind."

"If you spurn my love," cried the Chief, passionately, "breathe not a doubt of its truth and depth. Yet once more—pause before you decide—you say truly; years of passion may have rolled through my bosom during the short space we have known each other, yet the time has been short, and to you it has been marked with suffering. I had not forgotten your sacred cause of private grief, when I freed my tongue from its long-imposed restraint—but I also remembered that war was in our front, and a thousand evils stalking through the land, and I trusted that bucklered by my breast, the shafts of misfortune would fall harm-

lessly round you. Am I so loathsome in your sight that the convent's shelter, that living tomb, will be esteemed preferable to the acceptance of my plighted vows? I have been too impatient a wooer, and am rightly punished for my presumption—your decision will be rendered at some future moment. Say only that you will ponder on what I have urged. If you do not accord, you will not deny. Leave me yet a hope.”

Viola had now regained her self-possession, and roused her energies to meet the present emergency; it was not in woman's nature to listen unmoved to the Heron's pleading, but the occasion was one that peremptorily demanded frankness. She did not fear the wild Border Chief, in whose castle she found herself; her quick discernment had not failed to trace throughout his character a certain vein of honor, which, fantastic as it was, would not permit him to make use of the advantages of his position in order to compel

her inclinations. Drawing up her slight form to its utmost height, her cheek mantling with unusual bloom, she nerved herself to deliver her answer—her eye was downcast, for it pained her to behold the expression of the Borderer's agitated features as he awaited his doom—her voice was tremulous but distinct—and every word sank deep into the hearer's memory.

“Noble Chief,” she commenced, “no time can alter my determination on this distressing subject; let it then be closed between us for ever. I cannot listen to you, neither should you desire it. Would you receive in exchange for your loving, manly heart, a cold indifference and wandering fancy? Towards you, this would be a sore injustice, and in me, a most heinous sin. I could not buy protection at the price of happiness to both. You will promise, will you not, to try and overcome so bootless an attachment—you will not condemn me to eternal regret for the part I have involuntarily played here? I respect and honor

you, but the ties between us can never be closer."

As these words were pronounced, the Borderer leaned against the wall for support, his broad chest heaved, a slight spasm convulsed his throat, and his bronzed cheek paled so suddenly that Viola rushed forward to his assistance—he waved her back, and murmured hoarsely :

"I shall never forget."

Distressed beyond measure, the maiden sought in vain to comfort, and soothe, and lessen the blow she had inflicted. Her efforts produced no effect.

"John Heron," she said at length, "you shall pronounce your own judgment. Friendless and forlorn, you have been to me both benefactor and preserver—I am deeply grateful, yet I shrink from making the return you claim. Still if you feel that your future happiness is irrevocably dependent on a union with myself, I will no longer oppose your wishes, although I must honestly avow it will be to me a painful

sacrifice. If on these terms you will accept my troth, here is my hand, do with it as you will."

Sadly and calmly she extended her soft, white hand; the Borderer leaped from his attitude of despondency, and made a movement as if to seize the precious boon thus offered to him—but a latent principle of generosity forbade the act; his eager step was suddenly checked, the light faded from his eye—slowly he advanced, and tenderly taking the passive hand resigned to him, he raised it to his lips.

"Sweet mistress," said he, "foul shame befall me did I take so base an advantage of your gentle pity! I will not owe to reluctant gratitude the hand I would have perilled my life to win, had it been given with a willing mind. You have schooled me at last into submission, and recalled me to a better spirit. Henceforth trust me as a kinsman—banish from your memory all that has passed between us, and I will struggle to think that the hopes of the

last few weeks have been but an idle dream."

While the Borderer was speaking, Viola covered her face with her hands, and after he had ceased, she retained for some minutes the same position; when she raised her tearful countenance, the Chief had disappeared.

The sentinels marvelled somewhat at their leader's unequal pace and agitated demeanour, as he passed them in his rapid ascent to the top of the keep, to avoid their prying glances rather than to reconnoitre the adjoining country; yet even in the midst of his gloomy thoughts, his military eye did not fail to turn occasionally to the beacon fires which were now kindled in every direction.

At one moment, as he dwelt on the triumphant career before him, his hand grasped the hilt of his sword, and the next he thrust it impatiently aside, it could not aid in the accomplishment of his heart's chief desire. What availed it that troops of gal-

lant followers rallied round him, or that his name was a terror to his enemies, his arm a very thunder-bolt of war? He could not conquer the affections of one frail girl, and the rest profited him nought. Who can speak of the mightiness of human power, when steel and gold are equally impotent to purchase the dearest blessings of life?

During the whole of that night there was little repose for the inmates of the fortress, scouts came riding in from the different outposts, the clash of arms rang perpetually through hall and corridor, and huge stones and other missiles were dragged to the edge of the battlements that they might be in readiness to hurl down on any assailant. Robin Starhed's small strength, and Lilburn's gigantic force, were equally put in requisition, and there was scarcely an individual within the walls who did not contribute his utmost exertions to aid in the preparations for defence.

Father Paul was certainly an exception;

this respected personage did by no means relish the position in which he found himself, he was not ambitious to undergo the perils and glories of a siege; still to leave the castle was out of the question, for every road would be beset with difficulties and dangers far greater than might await him in the garrison. So he was obliged to abide where he was, and continued wandering to and fro like a troubled spirit, muttering dolorous complaints, and pouring forth his discontent into any ear that would lend him the smallest heed.

Many of the affrighted peasantry flocked to the castle as to a place of refuge—the sturdy miller hurried thither with the rest, ready to acquit him of his duty. Late on the following day came the intelligence that the Adventurer's band was in movement, and its course was directed towards the Heron's Haunt.

CHAPTER V.

THE WHITE ROSE.

There's a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told,
When two that are linked in one heavenly tie,
With heart never changing, and brow never cold,
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die !

MOORE.

RUMOUR had not erred when it announced the fact of the Pretender's advance at the head of his hostile forces. Ere another sun had set, he had encamped with his followers

at the distance of three arrows' flight from the castle; and taking possession of a cottier's homestead, which at their approach had been vacated by the affrighted owner, the Lady Katherine and her attendants were conducted to the humble tenement, and left there, closely guarded by a strong detachment. The locality was sufficiently remote from the principal scene of action to offer an appearance of security from the ordinary accidents of war; and each moment that the Adventurer could steal from more important duties was always devoted to cheer his bride, and relieve her natural apprehensions.

Every preparation for the commencement of the siege was completed, but not a blow had yet been struck, when at the earliest dawn of day Richard rode to the small building that contained his heart's best treasure. Notwithstanding the earliness of the hour Katherine stood on the threshold to meet him; he flung his horse's rein to the attendant who had accompanied

him, and the next instant was at her side.

“ Well, my fairy queen !” he exclaimed, as he threw his arm round her. “ You have risen before the sun to welcome your true knight who enjoys life only near you.”

“ Nay ! I would not have you for my sake neglect the weightier concerns that your position imposes ; yet it so gladdens me to be beside you,” and as she spoke, she leaned her cheek, tinted like the blushing rose, against her husband’s shoulder, and the summer gales, laden with the odours of the opening flowers, gently stirred the curls of golden brown that fell in rich confusion round her. “ ’Tis a glorious morning,” observed the Lady, as she drew Richard into her lowly cabin.

“ Let us hail it as a happy omen,” he exclaimed. “ A presage full of bright promise, announcing that our auspicious dawn shall shortly break into victory’s meridian blaze.”

“ Do you believe in auguries ?” asked the

young wife. "And think you there are mortal men who can foretell the future from a line in the hand, or the course of the silent stars?"

"What know I?" said the Adventurer. "Such lore is not mine, yet there may be some who by vigil and fast have attained to these unholy arts. I condemn their knowledge rather than discredit it."

"Once," said Katherine, "a famed Astrologer in Burgundy looked into my palm, and spoke of my future destiny—but his prediction was nought."

"And what said the seer?" smilingly demanded the fond husband.

"The prophet declared, that he who next should touch my hand, should hereafter receive its plighted troth at the altar."

"There, at least, the star-gazer saw more than was written in the book of fate," observed the young man. "Who was the individual designed to be so blessed?"

"The first person with whom I came in

contact was a simple clown, in mechanic's garb, who aided us in making our way through the riotous throng after we had quitted the Astrologer's abode. You will laugh at me, I fear, my dear lord, but it has run strangely in my head lately that this humble youth had a miraculous resemblance to yourself—similar, yet how unlike—his mean bearing so different from your noble port—the features might have been cast in the same mould, but his ignoble birth was expressed in every lineament, and kingly dignity sits enthroned on the brow of my royal prince. Still my imagination adheres to the likeness—what say you to my fancy?"

"Childish folly!" exclaimed the Adventurer petulantly as he turned away with a darkened countenance.

"You are not angry, Richard," cried Katherine, her eyes like those of a startled fawn, fixed with an air of timid enquiry on her husband. He sank his head upon

his hand, and the next moment her arms were round his neck. "You are ill, and suffering, and perchance have watched throughout the night; you need repose, while I have been heedlessly wearying you with my idle discourse."

Then the Adventurer pressed her to his breast, and besought her to forgive his forwardness; and Katherine, half tears, half smiles, endeavoured to win him from his momentary gloom.

Meantime, in another quarter of the encampment. a group of three persons stood together on a slight eminence, surveying the dingy towers of the distant fortress they were about to besiege. Two of these, Sir Ronald Graham and Maurice Vipont were sheathed in mail, the third individual was in ordinary attire, with the exception of a light steel hauberk, and the plain cap surmounted the attenuated features of Master Dalton.

"Ere noon we shall have commenced operations," observed Vipont. "'Twill be

warm work, I trow, for the Bastard Heron is not like to be torn from his nest until he has left the mark of his talons on some of us. He is a dishonored felon, and most shameless recreant; but he is not to be matched for daring on either side the Border. Many a good blow must be struck ere our banner floats on yon castle walls."

"If we carry a fortress or so," asked Sir Ronald, "is it your expectation that your countrymen will take heart, and muster round your prince's standard? The comers hitherto have been few and far between. I do affirm to you, I entertained an idea that Henry VII. held the crown so tranquilly only because the buds of the White Rose had been untimely cut off—I had been taught to believe that the name of Richard of York was so dear to Englishmen, that he had but to show himself to ensure an acknowledgment of his claims. How is this?"

"I am myself surprised at the general backwardness to join us," answered the

young man, reddening. "But men have grown so accustomed to Henry Tudor's yoke, that at last it has become a matter of indifference. and the Yorkists have sunk into an apathy so dense that the peal of the trumpet even fails to rouse them—they will not stir into activity until we astound them by some brilliant success. They have long sighed for a leader worthy to command them—what would they now? Our princely Richard possesses wisdom, courage, eloquence, and likewise he inherits the far-famed beauty of his royal sire. Who that loved the father could refuse to offer homage to the son, his living image?"

"You are loyal to York, young sir," said Dalton, while an ambiguous smile curled his thin lips. "But can you not conceive there are many ancient partisans in England whose spirits have been alienated by Edward's well-remembered ingratitude?"

"I know nothing of what you say," an-

swered Maurice. "I cannot account for the disaffection of others. The cause for which my forefathers bled, claims my arm, and the prince I serve has my love—if any man have endured wrong from the Fourth Edward, the misfortunes that have befallen his line may be reckoned ample atonement."

"Ay! the hand of Heaven has weighed heavily on that ill-fated race," observed Dalton. "Root and branch have they suffered—and Richard is the last. Who shall say for what destiny he is reserved?"

"In his person all shall be redeemed," exclaimed Vipont, gaily. "Let us once elevate him to the throne, and his firm spirit shall curb the unruly, while his gentle sway shall heal the breaches made by civil war. And then his bride, the Lady Katherine, peerless upon earth, must not all hearts be moved to ardour in her defence. You, Sir Scot, must fain be proud to hearken to the praises which everywhere await your northern White Rose."

"Unquestionably she is fair," answered Graham, vacantly, as he turned to arrange his sword which had become slightly displaced.

"You are lukewarm in your commendations, Sir Ronald; but I see you are one whose thoughts are fixed on achieving fame, and ennobling the name you bear, rather than on watching the changing colours of a woman's cheek. By my honour! you have right on your side. Who goes yonder? 'Tis father Hubert, our warlike priest; he turns his steps this way."

The confessor slowly advanced towards the group, and his searching glance rested for an instant on each of its members.

As we have before mentioned, he was universally popular, and had established himself on a confidential footing with all the Adventurer's followers; Master Dalton only being an exception; there was a cold reserve and habitual caution about this man which it was impossible to

fathom, and which forbade any approach to intimacy.

"Welcome, good father!" cried Maurice. "You are up betimes. We have now taken the field in earnest—during the night the plan of attack has been settled, and an hour hence we are to be in readiness and under arms."

Little guessed the Englishman that the arrangements for the assault, proposed by the Pretender, and acquiesced in by his council, were the offspring of the priest's busy brain—neither did the latter appropriate to himself any of the merit, as he answered gravely—

"We must each serve the general cause in our own way. I have blessed the banner which you will plant upon the enemies' battlements. I shall intercede with our lady for the victory which your strong arm and good blade will help to win."

"'Tis pity for you," said Vipont, "that

you must abide cooped with the camp, while honor is earned so close at hand."

Father Hubert shook his head in silent reproof, and turned to the Scot.

"Doubtless, Sir Ronald, this is not your first foray on English ground; and I have ever observed that military genius is a distinctive mark of your countrymen; do you imagine that the siege of this stronghold will detain us long from our onward march?"

"The number of our forces is so superior to that of the garrison, that we ought to carry the place in less than two days, but its lord has a name so noted for martial powers that no ordinary defence will be made; and perhaps even he may be able to hold out until the place is relieved."

"We have not heard," returned the priest, "that Henry Tudor has been able to assemble together his scattered armament; the invasion has taken him at unawares; the disturbances in the south have latterly afforded him some troublesome oc-

cupation, and a few raw recruits will not suffice to encounter your royal James; therefore it seems probable no foe will cross our path for some time to come. You are thoughtful, Master Dalton; does your foresight esteem our position worse than my inexperience can perceive?"

"I was thinking," replied Dalton, "that I had yet another copy of Richard's proclamation to transcribe; and moreover it would be wiser in my friends here to hasten to their posts than to tarry longer in pleasant discourse."

Thus recalled to a recollection of the duties that severally awaited them, after a few more words on all sides, the party withdrew, and the priest gazed long after their receding forms.

"I cannot understand that Dalton," he thought to himself; "there is some mystery about him, which I must not rest until I have unravelled; how adroitly he finds occasion to retire from my presence; how resolutely he avoids my questioning. I

like not his countenance; stern, crafty, and implacable. I must study his character more closely. 'Tis strange that qualities we discover in ourselves should awake our hatred when we descry them in another. As for the Scot, he is faithful at present; how long he is to be trusted, I know not; but I have his secret, and will keep an eye on him."

And busily absorbed in thought, Father Hubert wended his way to the encampment.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SIEGE.

Faint the din of battle bray'd,
Distant down the hollow wind,
War and terror fled before.
Wounds and death remain'd behind.

PENROSE.

FOR five days had the siege of the Heron's Haunt been carried on with desperate valour on the part of the assailants, while no decisive advantage had been obtained. The English had stood to their defences

with the most unflinching bravery. But this state of things could not be expected to continue ; ere the sixth day had closed, the Adventurer's troops had gained possession of the barbican ; this out-work had been taken by sheer superiority of numbers, and was of considerable importance, since it communicated with the moat, and would enable the besiegers to make their way to the very walls of the castle. The point had been obstinately defended ; sanguinary indeed was the conflict—every inch of the ground was disputed—few of the defenders escaped with life, so pertinacious was their resistance, the greater part were dragged from the battlements, and flung into the moat ; a few only effected a retreat into the fortress.

The most solemn pledges had been received by the Bastard Heron, that if he would hold out his castle, and keep the Pretender at play for six days, succour should be sent him at the expiration of that time, and he would be esteemed

to have done the state good service. At any other moment the Border Chief would have felt tolerably indifferent to the amount of peril incurred; but now that the safety of Viola Hatherton depended on his guardianship, he looked forward with feverish anxiety to the fulfilment of the promises of assistance.

As the seventh morning dawned, John Heron strode along the battlements, visiting, himself, every post, and encouraging the garrison with the idea that relief must now be hourly expected. Even while he spoke his glance wandered anxiously over the adjacent district, in the vain hope of descriing the Warden's clump of spears marching to his rescue.

It was seldom that any reverse sufficed to quell the spirit of the hardy Border-riders, whose frontier life habituated them to look death in the face with stoical fortitude, and who moreover had witnessed so many hair-breadth escapes that they never gave

way to despair, whatever their position might be.

The parapet was lined with men—from every loophole was thrust a weapon—even such as had been disabled in the previous conflicts did not make their wounded state a pretext for repose. During the past nights short had been the interval allotted for rest; the walls, that were almost of impenetrable solidity, contained recesses which were used as beds for some of the garrison, when the castle was more than usually full; on these rude couches the wearied men had stretched themselves alternately for an hour or so; the Chief alone had never closed his eyes since the moment when their situation began to assume an appearance of imminent danger. He felt that the loss of the barbican was of the gravest import, since it would afford the enemy an advantage which they were sure not to overlook—in truth he could not conceal from himself the fact that in case the

promised aid, did not arrive, the castle must inevitably be stormed.

On the western side of the battlements, at a point where the fortifications were the weakest, stood Dick Lilburn, busily employed in arranging a mangonel—an engine used at that period to heave stones upon the besiegers—the sloping plain below was alive with men, who were being formed, by their leaders, into two distinct columns, evidently in readiness for an assault, and who seemed quite indifferent to the shower of arrows that were poured upon them from every aperture in the fortress. The distance precluded the ejection of missiles of a weightier description.

On the other hand, when the Border-riders chanced to exhibit any part of their persons above the parapet, they became instantly a mark for the Scottish archers, who were placed under cover of a thicket of copse-wood; ill did it fare with such as wore no armour of proof, for the Ettrick Foresters were no mean bowmen.

“Look yonder,” said Lilburn to Robin Starhed, who was assisting him to prepare the engine for action; “how the vermin swarm up almost to the walls. Now they have gained the barbican, they will soon cross the moat, I trow; then will be our time—let the feud end as it may, we will contrive to crack some of their brain-pans. But what occasions that sudden movement?”

“A young man has just ridden into the field, whose orders they seem to await,” replied Robin.

“That must be the Pretender himself. By Saint Cuthbert! a fair outside. He dismounts from his horse, and walks along the ranks—doubtless he intends in person to lead his men on to the attack—that shows a bold spirit, at least. Mark him well, it would be a deed worthy of commemoration to lop down the very head of the rebellion. Why, methinks he will prove but a craven hound, after all, for a priest in hood and frock trudges ever at his elbow—

and I have oft noted that men who take the field with a monk by their side, are awanting in mettle when the hour of trial comes."

"Peace, irreverend boy!" exclaimed a voice from behind, and as the Border-riders turned hastily round, they perceived that the speaker was Father Paul, whose bluff countenance bore traces of the bodily terrors he had undergone since his arrival at the Heron's Haunt. "I would have you to know," continued the worthy man, "that when we leave our peaceful vocations, to mingle in your scenes of strife, it behoves you, whose trade is fighting, to do your utmost for our protection."

"There is sound sense in your argument," returned Rob; "and when the struggle comes to close quarters, I will not fail to see that your reverence has the loan of a cuirass, and is provided with a pike that will deal no ordinary blow."

"Nay, my young friend, I am no belli-

gerent, and the use of a carnal weapon is forbidden me. But do you seriously apprehend that the castle will not hold out until succour is sent?"

"How know you that relief will come at all?" said Lilburn; "or it may be deferred until the crows have picked the flesh from our bones. Whatever betides, I suppose we shall stand by the old castle till the last."

"You do not mean to say that quarter will not be given?" exclaimed Father Paul.

"None will be demanded," answered the Border-rider coolly.

"But the royal forces cannot leave us here to be butchered, after their solemn promises to march to our relief!"

"That they can do so, is certain enow—what they will do remains to be proved. See below! Robin, the knaves are making a fresh commotion; I fancy they are bringing forth the scaling-ladders, which shows they

intend shortly to pay us a visit. Did you ever look on so motley a band? As for the Scots, I reckon them in the light of our natural-born enemies; and those foreign bravos who deal in slaughter for hire, I should like well to have a bout with them; but there are English hearts among the troop, and rebels though they be called, I do not quite like having their blood on my hands. But what has become of the cowardly priest?"

"To cover, good Father, for your life!" shouted Rob, at the top of his voice, as he perceived a Scottish archer draw his bow, aiming in the direction of Father Paul, who had stepped unguardedly to the edge of the parapet that he might better scan the number of his foes; the shaft was featly aimed, and passed through the Frair's robe; evidently it had been the intention of the marksman to affright rather than to slay.

Uttering a loud cry, the priest rushed from the ramparts, and never paused until

he found himself in Viola's apartment, which seemed at least to promise temporary security. The maiden looked somewhat surprised at his abrupt entrance, but his scared aspect quickly told the tale that his incoherent tongue endeavoured confusedly to explain.

In one corner of the room the old man, Osbeck, was crouched; for hours he had retained the same position; he had sought an interview with the Armourer's daughter for the avowed purpose of interrogating her on some matters which concerned him, but now the cause of his coming had escaped him, and it would have been easy to believe that extreme terror at the approaching conflict had completely bewildered his senses, did not the sharp glance of his quick, restless eye denote that his attention was still keenly fixed on what was passing round him. In these two men, Father Paul and Osbeck, fear expressed itself in totally different modes; the former gave vent to bitter outcries and incessant lamentations on the

hardness of his fate, while the latter remained silent and watchful, intent only on seizing any chance of self-preservation.

Viola's noble mind could not comprehend the excessive dread exhibited by her companions; nevertheless she well understood the full extent of their danger; the Border Chief had at first proposed concealment, but she pleaded so earnestly to know the truth, in order that she might be prepared for the worst, that he had frankly owned their only hope of safety depended on the arrival of the promised relief, without which the castle must unavoidably fall into the hands of the enemy. The maiden had heard repeated accounts of the cruelties practised both by Scot and English Borderers in their different feuds, and remembering how obnoxious the Bastard Heron had rendered himself by the Warden's death, she scarcely expected that the fortress would be permitted to surrender on practicable terms.

Pondering sadly on her future destiny, she drew from the folds of her boddice the

ruby cross we have before mentioned, for her thoughts had reverted to the giver, the sharer of her girlish pleasures. Suddenly, with a cry of mingled surprise and triumph, the old man sprang from his corner, tore from her hands the cross, and grasped it convulsively in his own lean fingers.

“What would you?” said the maiden, in a soothing tone, for the abruptness of the proceeding led her to believe that the other’s intellect was wandering.

“Where got you this?” he demanded, eagerly. “It is mine—I gave it to my daughter—I have vowed to find it—the rack shall not force it from me.”

“It was sent to me by one who would not have bestowed the gift, had he not had good right to do so,” replied the maiden, quietly.

At that instant a shout, long and loud, rent the air, succeeded by a dull, heavy sound as of some ponderous weight falling, and then an arrow sped through the case-

ment, and fell quivering on the floor at Viola's feet.

The assault had commenced.

Osbeck looked wildly around, his hands dropped helplessly at his side, and he quickly ensconced himself behind the projection of the wall. The maiden, who dearly valued the apprentice's parting token, instinctively snatched it from his grasp, and concealed it once more in her bosom. With a steady eye and composed mien she next approached the casement, and attempted to raise the massive shutters constructed expressly for an emergency like the present—the task was beyond her strength. At the first noise of the onset the priest had rushed from the room, and Osbeck's personal apprehensions rendered him utterly helpless. As she was vainly endeavouring to arrange the wooden defence, Janet entered the chamber, and flew to her assistance; their united efforts soon accomplished their object.

We must now take a view of what was passing without—the Adventurer's forces had been divided into two columns, for the purpose of attacking simultaneously the southern and western side of the castle. On a species of floating raft they crossed the moat, maugre the missiles that were hurled on them from above. Scaling ladders were planted against the walls, the extent of which the garrison was not sufficiently numerous to man—in other places they attempted to effect a breach. The foremost man in the affray was the Adventurer himself, his plumed helm became the rallying post for his own followers, and ever waved where the strife was the hottest. Lilburn did not cease to ply his mangonel, and with right good effect, as might be judged from the groans and wails that mingled occasionally with the war-cries of the combatants. Seething pitch and oil were likewise poured down from the battlements, but this being done at hazard, the injury was not considerable. Amid the fearful

din, the cheerful voice of the Bastard Heron was continually heard, animating his fearless Border-riders, and gallantly they responded to the call. Behind the brushwood cover, the Scottish archers maintained a constant discharge of arrows, thick and fast as hail—and great was the havoc made by the famed marksmen among those who manned the battlements, while the latter stood to their defences, regardless of the exposures of their own persons. The contest was continued with unabated vigor, until the gathering darkness rendered it impossible to tell friend from foe; then, repulsed but not disheartened, the Adventurer's troops slowly retired, in the firm conviction that another day would terminate the siege, and make them masters of the fortress.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SIEGE CONTINUED.

The wall is rent, the ruins yawn,
And, with to-morrow's earliest dawn,
O'er the disjointed mass shall vault,
The foremost of the fierce assault.

BYRON.

WHEN the shades of evening had separated the combatants, the Border Chief ascended to the platform, and looked long and earnestly towards the south, in the direc-

tion that the promised succour should first appear.

“ They come not,” he thought to himself, “ and the struggle cannot last much longer—our Liege’s army may not yet have taken the field, and the Warden thinks not of us; doubtless he is gathering head as best he may, to encounter Scottish James. It matters little where a soldier meets his death—but Viola, so young and fair—I become weak as a child when I think of her destiny.”

And with a hurried step he took his course to the maiden’s chamber, to announce that the enemy had gained a permanent advantage, and there was still a chance of deliverance if relief should arrive before the morning light. As he made the circuit of the battlements, his eye fell on Dick Lilburn, whose arm had been disabled by an arrow; Robin was dressing the wound with great tenderness and skill.

“ That is not a grave hurt, I trust, old

comrade," said the Chief pausing. "Go and seek rest for a short space. In need so urgent, the loss of a friend true as steel could not easily be repaired."

"My right arm is still left for your service," replied Lilburn. "Besides 'tis a mere graze, one that would barely scare a girl, and Rob here has bound up the wound in such good fashion, that I can stand at my post till the last."

"Have him to his couch, Rob," said John Heron, drawing the youth aside. He will lack his utmost strength to carry him through the morrow."

"Have you, then, no expectation of a rescue?" demanded Starhed, eagerly.

The Chief shook his head and dropped his voice.

"We must not damp the spirits of our men; but I apprehend another sunset will not find our position mended."

With renewed recommendations to Starhed to have a care of his friend, John Heron turned away.

Night had settled upon the earth ; the full, bright moon, as she rode in the cloudless heavens, steeped hill and dale in a flood of quiet light; and her cold beams played round the blackened towers of the Heron's Haunt, and lighted the plain below, clearly revealing the faces of the dead who were stretched upon its surface.

The adventurer had sent from his encampment a detachment of men to bring in the wounded, and the work of humanity was not interrupted by any hostile movement from the defenders of the Castle.

The bodies of those in whom life was extinct, were suffered to remain upon the field—for the excessive fatigue of the survivors, forbade all unnecessary labor.

Sentinels had been stationed along the ramparts of the fortress with the strictest injunctions to vigilance, lest the enemy should meditate a night attack—although this was hardly to be expected, considering the incessant exertions of the last few days.

Giles Hurst had been appointed to a post where the fortifications were the weakest—the weary Border-rider leaned his sturdy form against a buttress—shouldered his pike and saluted the ear of night with scraps of frontier ballads, rather with a view of keeping himself awake, than from any spontaneous feeling of gaiety.

Sometimes he surveyed the field of carnage below, covered with the bodies of the slain, and he shuddered to think that, ere the next night was over, he might be as one of them. These unpleasant reflections were chased by another and a softer image, he closed his eyes that he might better retain the impression of the lovely vision that glided before his mind; a confused mistiness stole over his senses—he could have sworn he heard the light step of the miller's niece approach him—his head sank lower—he fancied that Janet bent over—his weapon slipped from his relaxing grasp, and his worn out frame

struggled no longer against the drowsiness that overwhelmed him.

From this state of temporary oblivion he was aroused by the touch of a hand upon his shoulder; in an instant he was on his feet and his partizan was levelled at the cloaked form that stood within a foot of him.

"Harm me not, Giles," exclaimed the pleasant voice of the miller's niece. "Do you not recognise me?"

"Janet, by all that is miraculous!" cried the young sentinel; and flinging one arm round her waist, he drew her gently towards him.

The damsel promptly released herself from his proffered embrace.

"'Twas a kind thought, dear Janet," continued the Border-rider; "that brought you to cheer a poor fellow with your company after so hard fought a day."

"Now, out on you for a mannerless ne'er-do-well! Has your presumption attained so

high a pitch as to imagine that I came hither to seek an interview with yourself."

"For what other purpose?" asked Giles Hurst, somewhat abashed.

"To do my uncle's bidding, to be sure, and carry meat and ale to the tired men on the opposite battlements. This is not a time for dainty scruples to forbid our being useful."

"An you had no business with me, why did you lay finger on my arm?" demanded Giles, still unwilling to credit his fair companion's account of herself.

"Because I had some slight regard for my own neck, and had no wish that our throats should be cut in the night while an idle sluggard dreamed at his post. As I passed the first time, I fancied you were buried in careful thought, but on my return I found you as fast as the castle itself."

"Was this your sole motive for arousing me?" asked the sentinel.

"Perhaps, in my foolish kind-hearted-

ness, I might have thought it was a pity that a brave soldier should be disgraced for being so faithless a warder. Suppose the Heron had passed this way in my stead, what would have happened then?"

"Right glad am I to have escaped such a mischance. I owe you thanks for this service, at least, Janet, although your good will is over scantily given. I cannot imagine how I came to drop asleep. I could vow it was only the moment before, I was thinking of you."

"More likely you were dreaming of a truckle bed, or a flagon of wine."

"You may flout me, Janet," said the Border-rider; "but the morrow will prove to you if I am a true man or no. There will be sharp work in the morn—this night's negligence shall be repaired, and the Heron's Haunt will not number many defenders more devoted than myself."

"Be not rash, Giles," returned the damsel. "What will become of us if you are all slain at the first onset. None will ever know

how heedlessly you kept watch—though, had the stern Chief discovered you, he would have dragged you forth to punishment, even if the castle were stormed an hour after.”

Janet turned her head, as she spoke, and beheld, within a few feet of her, the Border Chief himself.

The light of a moonbeam rendered his features plainly discernible; his eyes were fixed on the young pair before him, who remained motionless as statues; and then, without a word or sign of recognition, he moved slowly away.

It will easily be believed that Giles Hurst and the miller's niece did not hold much further parley; and the latter, drawing her mantle more closely round her, hurried from the ramparts.

In any other mood, nothing would have deterred John Heron from noticing severely the breach of discipline, of which he had been a silent witness; but now, that his own heart had been wrung by the rejection

of his love, a softer feeling began to mingle with his sterner attributes, and he was inclined to deal lightly with any exhibition of human infirmity..

The grey light of morning no sooner glimmered in the firmament, than every one in the Adventurer's encampment was in movement.

The preparations for the attack were made more carefully than on the preceding day—no precaution was omitted that might ensure success; and once more marshalled, in separate bands, they advanced to the attack.

Again the stones were heaved—the beams and weights of iron were flung upon the assailants; again the besiegers attempted to scale the walls, while their archers maintained that terrible storm of arrows, whose unerring aim took deadly vengeance on such of the defenders of the castle as exposed their limbs uncovered by sufficient armour.

Finding that, in spite of their most stre-

nuous efforts, no permanent advantage was achieved, the Adventurer called round him some of his English volunteers, and led the way into the barbican, still garrisoned by his troops—there he held brief council.

“We make no impression on the walls,” said Richard. “Go, one of you, and bid Grival concentrate his Burgundians for a desperate assault on the western side; this will divert the attention of the besieged while we cross the moat in the opposite quarter. I have noted there a back postern stoutly barricaded, but not so strongly, that our battle-axes may not break through; let a reserve remain in the barbican to push over in the other raft to our assistance when we have forced an entrance.”

This plan was put into speedy execution. Deafening was the clamour as the Count de Grival, at the head of his men-at-arms, rushed forward to the attack—some, who had no scaling ladders, mounted on the shoulders of their comrades, and endeavoured thus to make the ascent.

The Border-riders all flocked to this point to repel so fierce an assault. Meantime, the young Pretender and a trusty band, had crossed the moat, and were attempting to force open the gate. Their thundering blows upon the bars of iron and wooden beams, were unheeded amid the tumult and uproar made expressly by the Burgundians.

Sentinels had been stationed in the outer court, whose appointed duty it was to look constantly through the different apertures, and prevent any one from traversing the moat in that direction; but weary of a service apparently so profitless, the men had all crowded to the battlements, thinking from the height, they could well keep watch on what was passing below; but the war in front raged so fiercely that it permitted no breathing time for observation. Elated to find that they met with no other opposition than that presented by the barrier itself, Richard and his followers renewed their exertions.

The casement of Viola's chamber opened on that side of the castle ; the heavy shutter had been drawn before it, and excluded the light of day ; still that incessant hammering reached her ear. She sprang to a narrow loophole to discover what it meant ; there was nothing to be seen in that quarter of the building. Again the noise of repeated blows fixed her attention ; yet the sounds that rent the air were so stunning and numerous, that at times she doubted her capability to discern one from the other.

An instant she paused in deliberation, and the next she flew down to the outer court, and advanced sufficiently near the side door, to convince herself there was an enemy without, assailing the post.

With a step which, fleet as it was, could not keep pace with her eager anxiety, she rushed up the spiral staircase, threaded passage and corridor, and mounted to the ramparts.

Cased in mail, the Border Chief stood on the edge of the parapet, with the whole of his figure clearly revealed to those beneath, the mark he was for a hundred shafts which rebounded harmlessly from his well-tried armour.

At a moment when the contest waged the hottest, his eye fell on the light form of Viola, as she suddenly appeared upon the battlements. With one bound he was at her side.

"To the back postern," she exclaimed, breathlessly. The enemy are forcing their way through, and the post is left unguarded."

"Art sure of this?" demanded the Borderer.

"Reluctant to give a false alarm, I have myself been down to ascertain the fact. Haste, or in a few moments the castle will be lost."

"Thanks, noble girl," said the chief; "but I move not till you are in safety."

Viola hesitated not an instant; firm and unflinching when aught was to be done, she was not insensible to the natural fears of her sex, and her object being accomplished without another word she descended to her chamber, there to await the result in solitary suspense.

The Borderer did not stir until the maiden had disappeared from view; then quickly and quietly he made a signal for half a dozen of the boldest of the Border-riders to follow him. The intelligence of this fresh danger he did not communicate to the rest of the defenders of the ramparts, lest their attention should be distracted from the duty in which they were engaged.

The Borderer and his party quickened their footsteps as the noise of heavy blows resounded through the air. When they entered the outer court, the postern was evidently yielding to the exertions of those without. They sprang forward, but vain

was any effort to repair the damage. Another crash, and iron and wood gave way, and the impediment to the besiegers' entrance was overthrown.

The Adventurer and his followers had watched the falling door, and stood grasping their weighty battle-axes, ready to press into the gangway, when lo! up rose a barrier quite as impassable: the Border Chief and his valiant men.

The combat was now hand to hand. The young Pretender was soon reinforced by the corps of reserve which he had stationed at the barbican.

The Borderer then found himself compelled to summon additional succour from the battlements. The tide of war was now completely turned, and the spot where the postern had stood, became the centre to which every one pressed; the Burgundians abandoned the assault, and rushed to the other side of the fortress; many cast themselves into the moat and swam across, re-

gardless of the shower of missiles that fell around them.

Several of the besiegers, under the direction of their leaders, employed themselves with axe and lever in working at the demolition of the walls on either side, which task was rendered comparatively easy by the fall of the postern. Deeds of the most headlong valour were performed by both parties. The strength of a hundred men seemed to nerve the arm of the Border Chief. Thrice he cleared the pass, and as many times the Adventurer's numerical superiority, which was as ten to one, enabled him to fight his way back to the disputed post.

"Fight on, my lads," shouted John Heron; "show these false Scots your Border training. Down with the traitors! Give the foreign knaves a sample of your English mettle. Fight on, for your lives and honors."

Gallantly did the Border-riders obey their

Chief. Giles Hurst in especial, fired by a wish to atone for his want of vigilance on the past night, was ever in the front of the press; the Pretender's distinguished figure was the mark at which he aimed. This object was pursued by him with an eagerness bordering on temerity. On one occasion, when the assailants were borne back by a desperate sortie, Giles, who had far outstripped his comrades, found himself fighting singly amid a host of enemies. Beset on all sides, and bleeding profusely, he felt he could not long defend himself against such odds; still he contrived to keep his adversaries at bay, for the war-cry of the Bastard Heron suddenly sounded on his ear, and he knew that aid was at hand.

The resistless weapon of the Chief broke through the opposing ring, and the next moment the two Borderers were retreating slowly towards the walls. Side by side, and their faces to the foe, they acted merely on

the defensive, and parried the thrusts of their opponents with inimitable adroitness.

“Forward!” cried the Pretender; “let not two men shame your manhood.”

But the invincible strength of the Chief had been well tested, and had inspired dread in the most daring of his adversaries.

Perceiving the irresolution of his followers, the Adventurer himself dashed onward, and his blade was instantly crossed with that of the Bastard Heron. There was a momentary lull in the uproar around, as all paused to observe how the redoubtable champions acquitted themselves.

The issue was not long doubtful. Undaunted in courage, and expert in arms as was Richard, his experience had been in the tilt-yard rather than the field, and his untried youth was no match for one whose sinews and muscles had been braced by a life of constant use. Succumbing under the superior force of his adversary, the

Pretender became gradually exhausted, and at length he half stumbled. Although he immediately recovered his footing, a stroke from his opponent had unclasped his helmet, and as it rolled to the ground it left exposed to view his noble countenance, glowing with youthful beauty, and bearing a most vivid resemblance to the portrait of Edward the Fourth on the field of Towton. His head was utterly defenceless; still Richard grasped his sword with a firm hand.

For half a minute the Borderer's weapon was suspended in the air, while he gazed on the features before him; and when he stepped forward to complete his victory, a score of the Adventurer's followers closed round their leader, and thus the combatants were parted.

Then the Chief and his companion effected their retreat within the walls, from whence he had forbidden the other Border-riders to stir while he attempted the rescue of Giles Hurst, so apprehensive was he that

any impetuous sally might occasion the actors therein to be cut off from the castle. This action terminated the day's warfare. The gloom of night veiled the scene in an obscurity so profound that the struggle could not be continued without running a risk of doing injury to their own partisans; the Adventurer therefore withdrew his forces into the barbican; maintaining a keen watch on what was going forward in the fortress. It would not be a difficult matter for the Border-riders to replace the fallen postern by a barricade, which if not equally strong, might serve as a temporary means of defence, but unhappily for the besieged, the walls on each side the door had been thrown down by the unremitting labour of the Burgundian men-at-arms—darkness alone had prevented the castle from being stormed immediately, and so superior in number was the beleaguering force that there could be no doubt of the result—success was now certain.

The Border Chief glanced with a somewhat melancholy air on his devoted band ; several had fallen in the contest, and the greater part of the survivors were wounded. Having posted a strong guard at the spot where the walls were overthrown, and desired the remainder of his men to take some rest, John Heron mounted to the top of the keep, and stepped out on the platform which commanded a view of the whole adjacent country. Vainly he looked towards the south ; there was not sufficient light to penetrate into the distance, for all was one grey, indistinct mass, but his quick ear told him no sound in that direction broke the deep stillness of the silent night.

“ We might yet be saved,” he murmured to himself, as he strode impatiently to and fro, “ if these laggard troops should come to our rescue ere noon to-morrow. We might plant our bodies in lieu of the walls that have been overthrown, and surely

we might hold our own for a few hours longer."

And the Borderer fell into a train of anxious thought which was shortly interrupted by the approach of Robin Starhed.

The youth carried in his hand a headless arrow—he briefly explained it had been found in the niche of a buttress, whither it had been featly sent by some dexterous marksman from without—he did not imagine it came from any in the Adventurer's encampment, as it was evidently aimed from the opposite quarter. A paper was carefully attached to the arrow, and it was bound with a gay-colored ribbon, apparently for the purpose of attracting observation.

The Border Chief impatiently seized the scroll, bade Robin instantly bring a torch, and then by its flickering light, read the following words—

“ Make the best terms you can—
the royal troops are unable to march to
your succour.

“ D'AUBIGNY ”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BORDERER AND THE MAIDEN.

How love came in, I do not know,
Whether by th' eye, or ear, or no ;
Or whether with the soul it came,
At first, infused with the same ;
Whether in part, 'tis here or there,
Or, like the soul, whole everywhere,
This troubles me ; but I, as well
As any other, this can tell,
That when from hence she does depart,
The outlet then is from the heart.

HERRICK.

“ ALL is over,” thought the Borderer, as
he tore the scroll into a hundred fragments,

and crushed them fiercely beneath his armed heel. He had instantly recognized that the letter was authentic, for the handwriting was well-known to him to be that of Lord D'Aubigny, one of King Henry's generals, with whom he had already maintained a correspondence, when he received the commission to hold out his castle for six days, under the solemn engagement that it should then be relieved.

For upwards of an hour the Chief remained in the same attitude, his broad forehead clasped in both hands, and his arms supported against the parapet, while he resolved his present position. Naturally he would have inclined to defend himself to the last, to dispute every foot of ground, and when the enemy had won their way into the stronghold, he would have fired the Castle, and let everything that it contained perish in the ruins; such a grave he would not have shrunk from. The brow of the Chief grew dark and stern as he yielded for a moment to these sanguinary

visions; but the recollection of Viola promptly chased away any thought of defiance—he began to contemplate a compromise.

But what terms could he expect? His adversaries were well acquainted with his situation; with a band diminished by slaughter, and enfeebled by wounds, no effectual resistance could be made; an unconditional surrender would be exacted, and the idea of the sacking of the fortress, and the exposure of the defenceless to the insolence of an unrestrained soldiery, sent a visible shudder through the stalwart frame.

Was there no other course to be devised? For himself he had resolved from the first not to fall alive into the hands of the Scots; but human resolutions, light as the feather that the wind blows where it wills, are ever the sport of change and circumstance. The Borderer's mind was now quickly made up.

“On the morrow,” he said to himself, “I

will despatch a messenger to the Pretender's encampment, and will propose to deliver up myself and castle into their power without another blow being struck, provided that every other living soul shall be allowed to depart unmolested from the Heron's Haunt. A generous foe might well be content with this; the remnant of my poor fellows may thus be saved, and the rack will be to me as a bed of down, if Viola were not left alone in her beauty and helplessness, to contend with dangers worse than death."

It is not to be supposed that this determination cost the Borderer no pang—setting aside the certainty of his being doomed to a most cruel death, the very fact of submission, and the abandonment of hearth and hall to the stranger, gave the keenest wound to his pride—but these poignant regrets were far outweighed by the relief his mind experienced in the reflection that Viola might be saved, and owe her deliverance to him. All hope of self-preservation

had abandoned him from the moment that the scroll from D'Aubigny reached him.

Having removed from his person the blood-stained traces of strife, he sought Viola in her chamber. A torch projecting from a bracket in the wall shed an unequal light through the room; her eyes were fixed eagerly upon the opening door, the day to her had been one of the most fearful suspense, unrelieved by any companionship—poor Janet's uncle, the sturdy miller, had fallen in the fray, pierced by an arrow to the heart, and the sorrowing niece was engaged in performing the last offices to the dead in the guard-room, where the bodies of the slain had been deposited, Viola sprang forward as the Chief approached; her face was pale as ivory, she was outwardly calm, but her whole appearance bespoke intense anxiety.

"How went the day, noble Heron?" she enquired. "I fear me you have no good news to impart."

"I am in truth the herald of disappoint-

ment, and your prompt suspicion declares that my brow wears its livery—I was ever a poor dissembler—we still hold the castle, but the morning light will reveal our thin ranks offering a bleeding barrier to the foe in lieu of the walls that have been overthrown.”

“But the aid—the promised succour—the royal forces—” gasped out Viola. “Is there no hope?”

“None in resistance,” returned the Borderer. “I have received intelligence that King Henry’s troops will be prevented from marching to our rescue; our only expectation of safety is in a compromise.”

“They are men, not brutes,” exclaimed the maiden; “they will take those to mercy who resist no longer; such a grace can scarcely be denied—no more blood will be spilt, and all may yet be well.”

As she spoke, she bent her gaze wistfully on the Chief, who preserved an air of unperturbed serenity, and answered cheerily:

"Twill be as you say, fair mistress, I am sure on't. That this old castle should pass into other hands will be no great evil, and it can hardly be called a sacrifice to surrender what we are not strong enough to retain."

A lingering feeling of doubt still remained in Viola's bosom, for a faint, glimmering idea of the Borderer's generous purpose had shot across her mind, and she said with slight emphasis:

"Remember! there must be an equal deliverance for all, or the surrender must not be made—we must have the promise of freedom to all, the highest as well as the meanest—if the enemy refuse this, all in the fortress have suffered together, and together let us die."

"It is possible," resumed John Heron carelessly, that we shall be separated when the castle is given up. I shall doubtlessly be detained as a hostage for the good faith of my men, and will therefore place you under the guardianship of some of them,

with orders to attend you wherever you will."

"I will take your counsel in everything, if you will swear to me that no terms shall be accepted which do not procure escape and safety for all."

"You ask, sweet mistress, what I cannot grant; I apprehend there is no cause for alarm, but if to ransom the blood of others I should not spare my own, could you marvel that I gladly paid the purchase? Who can gainsay my right to lay down my life for my people?"

There was an air of stern determination legible in the countenance of the Border Chief that did not admit of further parley; Viola sighed and turned away, for she felt it would be of no avail to argue with one whose course was taken.

"Before we part," resumed the Borderer, "and my manifold duties may not afford me another opportunity, I would crave your forgiveness, gentle mistress, for the selfish thoughtlessness which detained you here,

and consequently made you a witness of these scenes of bloodshed—think notharshly of me for this, and forget aught else in which I may have pained you.”

From the hour when John Heron had proffered his unsuccessful suit, he had abstained so rigidly from any action or expression that might denote passion and awaken alarm, so strict a guard had he placed over word, look, and tone, that in each succeeding interview Viola's friendly confidence had been confirmed—still she did not misinterpret him ; rightly did she appreciate the noble self-control that led him to refrain from demonstrations that might affect her peace, and his present allusion to his unfortunate love touched her deeply, and brought the ready tears to her eyes.

She glided to his side, and took his large muscular hand in both of her own.

“ You have nothing to reproach yourself with,” said she, “ unless generous kindness, ceaseless service, and manly faith, are

matters for upbraiding—'tis I rather who should seek pardon from you—oh! believe not that my wayward heart does not estimate the worth of your own, because it is not in my power to reward it as it deserves."

"Gently, very gently did the Borderer disengage his hand from the soft fingers that inclosed it—in that day's fight many had been his deeds of valour and prowess; but there was more heroism still in the resolution with which he averted his glance from the fair, earnest face that turned to him so trustfully—how madly he longed to clasp to his breast that loved form once, only once, ere he bade farewell for ever—but he resisted the headlong impulse, he stilled his beating pulses, and steadied his voice, as after a minute's pause, he replied—

"Let no tear for me dim your eye, mistress Viola; I am well content with my lot, and these stirring times have aided to dispel all softer dreams—'twere a thought for mirth that a rude frontier chief should

prate of love when the foe is at his gate, and the sword ever in his hand—e'en now I have dallied here too long, while my rule is needed at a hundred different points. May all good angels watch over you!"

Waving an adieu, John Heron hurried from the maiden's chamber. He did not allow himself to indulge in any visible emotion, but promptly repaired to the ramparts, and bestowed a word of encouragement on the various sentinels—then he retired awhile to rest, and endeavoured to snatch a few hours' repose so deeply needed by his weary frame.

Morning broke brightly and purely, and little did the appearance of the ensanguined plain accord with the light and bloom of earth and sky at that fair matin prime. The Border-riders looked gloomily at each other; but there was no sign of wavering courage on their rugged brows, as they stood silently awaiting the onset of their adversaries. Giles Hurst had contrived to steal a few moments wherein to comfort poor

Janet, whose buoyant spirit had been so far tamed by sorrow that she listened to his assurances of support and protection with tearful gratitude, in lieu of the arch disdain with which she had been wont to repel his advances.

Dick Lilburn was posted at the breach in the walls from whence he watched the movements of the foe, and Robin Starhed, as usual, was by his side.

"Hark'ee to that shout of triumph," said the former. "Yon pack of wolves, thristing for our blood, will be on us shortly; they are later to-day than common, I reckon they think themselves sure of their prey—they may be right in the main, but we will lower some of their crests for them; the conquerors shall be shorn of their pride before their pennon waves on the towers of the Heron's Haunt."

"They seem not to have much stomach for the fray," answered Rob; "for their troops are not yet formed into line. But here comes our chief."

John Heron moved along with his customary air of authority, while his active mind was busily employed in revolving the choice of a messenger to do his bidding at the Adventurer's encampment.

The Envoy was to be the bearer of the following proposals:—that the castle should be instantly surrendered, without further bloodshed, and the person of the Chief should be delivered into the enemy's hands, to be dealt with according to their pleasure, provided that every other living soul in the fortress should be dismissed unharmed. If these terms were rejected resistance to the death would be made, and John Heron would fire his castle and perish in the flames, rather than fall alive into the power of his foes.

The Border Chief knew that his capture would be a matter of infinite weight with the Scots, and he imagined that the young Pretender would be pleased to gratify his great ally, James of Scotland, by affording

him the means of vengeance on one who had so repeatedly set them at defiance.

However, it was no easy task to find a messenger to undertake the negotiations. To give the commission to any of the Border-riders would be to ensure its failure, for the utmost stretch of his authority could not induce the devoted band to acquiesce in a treaty which would secure safety to all except the Chief whom they would have died to serve. While in this state of doubt, he bethought him of Father Paul, whose personal fears would make him a most zealous ambassador in such a cause. Calling the priest to his side, he was about to broach the subject, when his attention was diverted by a sudden movement among his opponents on the opposite side of the moat.

At length a herald, attended by two men-at-arms, issued from the barbican, and slowly approached the embattled gates, which formed the principal entrance to the fortress. The Borderer immediately per-

ceived that his purpose had been forestalled, and the enemy was about to summon him to surrender.

Bidding Rob fling open the portal, and desire that some of the men should descend from the ramparts and range themselves in the court, in order to make as brave a show as possible, the Border Chief seized his arms and hurried to the gates to meet the herald.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COUNCIL.

Judge me not ungentle,
Of manners rude, and insolent of speech,
If, when the public safety is in question,
My zeal flows warm and eager from the tongue.

Rowe.

OUR history must now retrograde a short space, in order to explain the cause of the peaceful embassy which we left, at the close of our last chapter, advancing to the gates of the Heron's Haunt.

On the previous evening, after the termination of the contest, the Adventurer, reccompanied by Dalton, passed along the encampment, and paused before his own tent. The yeoman who guarded it delivered to him a packet which had just been brought by an armed horseman. Beckoning to his companion to follow, Richard stepped into the tent. Hastily he tore open the envelope, and as he read the contents of the enclosure, his eye kindled and his brow became gradually clouded. At length, he flung the packet aside in very visible impatience. Dalton had watched him keenly, even while he seemed to be intent on examining the temper of the polished Damascus blade that had been thrown carelessly upon a seat.

“ ’Tis from James of Scotland,” exclaimed the Adventurer, again seizing the paper. “ In this he says he has encountered no enemy of sufficient force to check his route; he has pursued his onward course, mercilessly harrying the poor peasantry, putting those who resist to the sword, and burning

their homesteads; and this he tells to me as if he expects that I should share his triumph—I, who am the unwilling cause of pillage and suffering to these innocent people.”

“His Majesty of Scotland thinks of avenging former aggressions against his own kingdom, rather than of the advancement of your interests,” observed Dalton.

“It is even so. For his needless cruelties my name will be held in execration by the English I desire to conciliate. Better had it been for them that the line of York were extinct than that its claims should be revived to be recorded in characters of blood.”

“It is easy for you, my lord, to remonstrate with your peaceful ally,” returned Dalton, “and at least it would be wise to show the nation that a right royal clemency overrules your princely heart—thus your misguided subjects may sooner be won to your sway than by daily butcheries. King James pursues his private aims, and heeds not your judgment in the matter; let Rich-

ard of York act in return according to the promptings of his nobler spirit."

"You say well," cried the Adventurer. "I would now speak to you of this castle that has held our beleaguering force at bay for such an unexpected length of time ; on the morrow the place must fall into our hands, still the remnant of these rebel Borderers must be saved."

"My lord, if you would admit them to mercy, it must be done quickly. In the heat of conquest and excitement of triumph, it may be difficult to curb the license of your foreign soldiery, and excesses would probably ensue that might be regretted but could not be repaired."

"What then can be done?" asked Richard.

"An honorable capitulation might be made," answered Dalton thoughtfully.

"Ha! it shall be so. I thought not on't. The terms I shall propose they will not reject—they shall be such as it seems a generous conqueror to offer, and

brave men to accept. Go, good Dalton, haste to the barbican. Summon all our leaders hither, and we shall take counsel on this new resolve."

Dalton paused a second, doubtful if he should suggest that the Scottish commanders would probably offer opposition to a surrender that promised immunity to the Bastard Heron, whose capture would be so gratifying a tribute to their sovereign; however, it instantly occurred to him that he should best attain his purpose by allowing the Adventurer to declare his humane sentiments unreservedly in full council; when the excitement of debate would naturally lead him to express himself warmly, and pride would forbid the abandonment of his intentions, in compliance with any counter representations.

Hurriedly Dalton threaded the encampment, in quest of those he had been despatched to summon. He found the greater number of the leaders at the barbican, arranging the watch for the night, discussing

the best mode of storming the fortress on the morrow. With prompt alacrity Richard's message was obeyed.

The Count de Grival tarried but to exchange his heavy armour for a hauberk of lighter metal, ere he took his route for the appointed place of rendezvous. Lord Hamilton, Sir John Elliot, and some others of the Scottish troop, turned their steps in the same direction—and Maurice Vipont and those of the English volunteers of sufficient note and mark to entitle them to such distinction, readily attended the summons. Whether by accident or design, Father Hubert received no intimation of what was going forward, although he had ever been wont to hold a prominent place in the Pretender's councils. Sir Ronald Graham was sought the last, and as Dalton proceeded with him to Richard's tent, they lingered awhile behind the rest, and embraced that opportunity of conferring in private.

“The moment is come,” whispered Dal-

ton, "that shall disjoint King James from this ill-sorted enterprise, and then, when it no longer touches your allegiance, you can bear what part you will in the quarrel between England's rival roses."

"What mean you now," asked Sir Ronald.

"I tell you a spark has been kindled that my covert breath shall fan into a flame that will consume and turn to ashes every link of friendship between the King of Scotland and his young ally."

"You speak," returned Graham, "as if some sudden event had occurred within the hour. Give me your adventure, I pray you."

"Things strange and marvellous do not frequently betide, but wise men guide the minutest circumstances so as to make of them the wheels to carry us on to the goal we strive for. I have no time to add more. Yonder is the tent: we are called to discuss the surrender of the Heron's Haunt—only be sure not to oppose what I shall say."

“That will be an easy matter,” answered the Scot; “unless, indeed—”

“Tush! there is treason hatching. Your thought is ever on plot and conspiracy. But here we are: not another syllable—remember!”

As this word passed his lips, he entered the tent, followed by his companion. Some slight preparations had been made for their reception; lights had been brought, and seats were placed around. The Adventurer had not changed his attire since the morning, and his coat of mail was hacked about, and stained with blood in divers places; but this only added to his martial appearance, and recalled to remembrance the valour he had displayed. The different leaders were welcomed by him with princely grace, and the lowly deference which they formerly tendered to superior rank was now converted into the homage paid by the brave to the bravest.

All who had been summoned were assembled, and the proceedings were about to

commence, when the curtain of the tent was drawn aside, and Father Hubert entered with his wonted calm deportment, and quietly placed himself behind the Pretender's seat.

“If Dalton had proposed that the priest should not be admitted into the council, at least he betrayed no mortification at the failure of his plan, and the Adventurer who had never entertained an idea of excluding his ancient confidant, merely bestowed on him a nod of recognition, and then addressed those who encircled him.

“Noble friends,” he commenced, “we have gained a hard-won victory, as the blood of many a poor fellow poured forth on yonder plain will testify. Let us mingle mercy with triumph. The enemy can no longer resist us—the walls and postern are down, and a few hours must put us in possession of the place. It is to be expected the besieged will defend themselves with stubborn courage to the last, and the struggle will occasion a fearful expenditure of

human life. It becomes us all well to consider if such a lamentable sacrifice can be avoided. Brave sirs, I will avouch my heart feels an irrepressible pity for my dead father's subjects, now immured within the walls of the doomed fortress. I would fain save that misguided remnant if in my power. At sunrise, therefore, I propose to despatch a herald to the Heron's Haunt, bidding them capitulate on honorable terms. Surely there are none here who would seek to condemn so reasonable an act of humanity."

The Adventurer glanced round the circle—there was a long pause, and then Lord Hamilton arose.

"My lord," said he, turning full upon Richard, "I honor you for your solicitude to spare further bloodshed—in the conqueror, mercy adds another laurel to the crown of victory; in the monarch, 'tis the brightest attribute of the sceptre—still, while your grace is extended to the innocent, I must demand, in the name of my Liege and King, that the Chief of the

stronghold, the Bastard Heron, shall not be included in the pale of mercy, but shall be detained a captive until he stand trial for the treacherous murder of our Warden, Sir Robert Ker. Pardon, my lord, that I have spoken frankly—it would be well that the interests of my sovereign had an abler representative, nevertheless, in zeal for his service I yield to none.”

“There are others,” exclaimed Dalton, “who profess an interest for the prince they serve; and I also crave permission to lay open my sentiments somewhat boldly in this presence. Without consideration to our leader’s royal pleasure in the cause of humanity, it is imperative that he should admit the castle to a surrender on fair terms—an act of needless butchery will be an eternal blot upon our arms—it may not be done—and could any here, acquainted with the character of the true English Borderers, imagine for a moment they would accept a compromise which must deliver to the block the head of their Chief—rather reverse the

picture; if the death of all could purchase the safety of that one, and the suffrages of the many could decide the matter, there might be less chance of rejection. With regard to the former offences of the Bastard Heron, let those whom he has injured, avenge themselves when and how they can, according to the custom of old frontier feuds—with these ancient quarrels we have nought to do.”

An angry flush passed across Lord Hamilton's countenance as he listened to this speech, but he offered no interruption. At its close Maurice Vipont caught the Adventurer's eye, and sought permission to speak, which the other accorded with a grave gesture of acquiescence.

The young partisan's manner was moderate and self-possessed, and his voice was pitched in those calm equable tones so calculated to soothe and mollify the jarring elements that promise discord—the part he took in the debate was totally unexpected by his leader, and probably unwelcome, still every word

he uttered was characterized by the deep deference which invariably tinged his intercourse with the personage he acknowledged to be Richard of York. Vipont quietly expressed his aversion to further bloodshed, yet, whatever might be the ulterior consequences, he could not uphold the evasion of a criminal like the Bastard Heron, whose hands were so deeply dyed in guilt—punishment on the offender, he argued, should not be awarded out of any friendship or reverence for the King of Scotland, although both were largely his due, but from the innate love of justice that should guide the counsels of the most merciful sovereign.

The Count de Grival next delivered his sentiments which ran somewhat to the purport, that the desire of the commander should be implicitly obeyed, albeit in his own opinion, both as warning and precedent, he considered it would be wise to storm and sack a fortress which had been so stubbornly defended. Most of the English present declared their abhorrence of pro-

longing the struggle, and advocated most warmly that the place should be summoned to surrender on conditions that would secure immunity to all. Sir John Elliott supported Lord Hamilton's views with much prolixity, and his lengthy representations, tending to prove the inalienable right of King James to the disposal of John Heron's person, received a most patient hearing. Sir Ronald Graham was about to follow on the same side, when his English friend, who had placed himself next him, pressed his hand, significantly, and bending forward, muttered a few words in his ear. The young Scot bit his lip, and sank back in his seat. All had now spoken, and Dalton once more claimed the attention of the motley council. Again he urged the impolicy of dealing forth harsh measures against their opponents, the cruelty even of exposing their own troops to needless dangers, and the profound necessity of cultivating the goodwill of a people over whom, he prayed that Richard of York might live to reign.

“ In sooth,” he continued, “ it must be avowed that our cause suffers daily injuries from the aggressions practised by James of Scotland on the unoffending peasantry; the whole country side echoes with the tale; in him these may be simply acts of reprisal, but on our parts some distinguished deed of mercy has now become requisite to prove that English hearts still beat in our breasts. and that although we have taken up arms to place the legitimate heir upon the throne, we make no war on the weak, and can feel compassion for a vanquished foe. All of King James’s subjects hold not the same mind on this question, and the maintenance of an honourable silence,” glancing at Sir Ronald, “ shows that the conscience cannot approve what the tongue will not reprehend. The Monarch whose false pretence of amity—”

“ False in your throat !” interrupted Lord Hamilton, springing forward with flashing eyes and hand upon the hilt of his sword. “ He who says that James of Scotland has

done aught that breathes of dishonor, be he high or low, prince or scrivener, is a base slanderer, and I will uphold my charge at the sword's point."

There was a dead pause, as the bold words rang through the tent. The Adventurer looked sternly at the fiery young noble; with one hand placed his cap upon his head, while with the other, he made a sign for Dalton to stand back and be silent.

There was an air of fixed resolve on Richard's noble features that could not be mistaken; Father Hubert, who had taken no part in the debate, although he had watched the proceedings with the most lively interest, now glided forward, and would have spoken to him, but the other motioned him away, and determinedly avoiding his eye, addressed the attentive audience.

"Knights and cavaliers," said he, "you have spoken freely, and I have pondered well your arguments. My course of action is now decided; in the morn I shall despatch a herald to summon the valiant bor-

derers to surrender, on a solemn promise that freedom and safety shall be guaranteed to all. By this means, we may spare much loss of life ; and the capture of one prisoner can not counterpoise so lamentable a sacrifice. Enough on this head—Dalton, I must warn you to give less license to your tongue, when you speak of a sovereign who, I am proud to own, has showered benefits, with princely profusion, on one who esteems ingratitude the worst of crimes. Lord Hamilton, I owe you no grudge for the heat of loyalty which has induced your trespass beyond the bounds of discretion ; still it would be well to remember that, when misfortunes encompass the possessor of elevated rank, a generous spirit should hedge him round with a higher degree of observance, because he is powerless to resent its breach. Now, fair sirs, I would have you seek the rest you have so hardly earned—pleasant dreams attend you ! Vipont, a word with you.”

The council slowly dispersed. Lord Ham-

ilton bowed lowly as he withdrew—too sensitive not to feel that his rash temper had led him into error, and too proud to confess it. One by one, the various leaders quitted the tent, and Maurice Vipont was left alone with the Adventurer.

CHAPTER X.

DEBATE.

Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep.

SHAKESPEARE.

FATHER HUBERT did not retire without making an effort to obtain a private conference with the Pretender—and finding himself baffled in the attempt, he only resolved to await a more favorable opportunity—his clear intelligence foresaw that the King of Scotland would infallibly take umbrage at

the free deliverance of the Bastard Heron, whose former rescue on the road from Glanmorris to Edinburgh, had so severely galled his pride.

Meantime, Richard had detained Vipont merely as a pretext to prevent himself being harassed by representations to which he had determined not to yield. Having discoursed for some time on the brightening prospects that their present success began to unfold, the young volunteer was dismissed, and Richard set forth to pay a visit to his bride.

It is true, he had given ear, with apparent impartiality, to the discussion on the subject of the surrender of the Heron's Haunt, but from the commencement his mind was fully made up not to permit any opposition to deter him from offering the Borderers a capitulation on honourable terms.

He had been irritated beyond measure at the account of the excesses, and acts of oppression committed by King James, whose

conduct seemed to evince that he was more bent on laying waste an enemy's country, than on assisting his new ally to recover the inheritance he claimed.

The Adventurer's haughty spirit rebelled at the idea of dictation, and his kind heart could not brook that he should be the cause of death and spoliation to the unresisting inhabitants whose land he had invaded.

Inwardly he registered a vow that he would never stain a victory by unnecessary bloodshed, or pursue a triumph with vindictive rigour ; in the present instance, his purpose was fixed to assert his independence even should it cost him the friendship of the Scottish Monarch, from whose aid he had expected so much.

As Katherine rushed forward to meet her husband's offered embrace, and hear from his lips the history of the day's encounter, mingled with assurances of his personal safety, her glorious eyes sparkled with joyous tears, and exclamations of thankfulness broke from her at every pause.

Richard was by no means insensible to the depth of tenderness he had inspired, and fondly, passionately did he love in return.

"You are grave, my dear lord," cried Katherine, as the lamplight streamed full upon his lofty features. "And yet I have heard that the castle is won, and that the sword, ever foremost at wall and breach, was that of my own true knight."

"It is the disposal of our victory that has filled my mind with the weight of care which your watchful glance has traced; the Heron's Haunt can resist but a few hours longer ; shall the fortress be stormed, or may we permit a compromise? Since the field, we have held council, and opinions strongly differ."

"Does the question admit of doubt?" demanded the lady. "Clemency may avail more to win hearts and disarm foes than the strokes of a thousand avenging blades?"

"Ay! Rose of Scotland; and in ordinary

circumstances inclination and policy, right and self-interest might be combined; but I must call to your recollection, fair counsellor, that the Chief of yon Border band is the Bastard Heron, of whom you have so often heard mention; he who slew your Warden, and has a score of times defied the power of your king. To bid the besieged capitulate on terms that would not secure safety to their leader, would be to send a message to the winds—they would die at their posts rather—yet think you not that James Stuart may be ill-pleased to find his known pleasure set at nought? What say you now?"

"There was a slight conflict in Katherine's bosom, for she had been reared to entertain a feeling of most profound loyalty for her natural sovereign, and early impressions are not easily erased; however, her hesitation was but momentary, and then she spoke with her low, earnest voice, and glowing cheek.

“I must own to you, my Richard, that I am weak enough to recoil from what might awake the displeasure of my native liege but—away with the unworthy thought—it is not for you to be the instrument of vengeance in the hands of another—when I wedded you, my allegiance was transferred—am I not henceforth English? Your country is now mine, and to its interests we should be devoted. Mercy is a duty we are taught by Heaven, and we owe to man; let the Heron go free, since the lives of others hang on his, and we must brook, as best we may, the wrath of James Stuart.

“Dearest and best,” murmured the Adventurer, as he drew his young wife closer towards him, “be ever my guide and and stay, and though fortune deny me crown and kingdom. I shall hold myself richly blessed, if you are left to me. But hush! whom have we here?”

The interruption was occasioned by a message delivered by a yeoman from Father

Hubert, who besought an immediate conference with Richard.

"It is ever thus," exclaimed the lady, "that priest continually interposes between me and my moments of happiness. Still, my dear lord, if I am compelled to resign you, it is bootless to sadden you with my complaints."

"Not so," said the Adventurer; "I will bid them tell the good Father that I am wearied, and cannot speak with him now; I will give him the meeting to-morrow an hour before sunrise—this must perforce content him."

Accordingly the messenger was dismissed with this reply, and the confessor was obliged to await patiently the time appointed.

There was another individual in the encampment, who was equally dissatisfied with what had taken place at the council—this was Sir Ronald Graham—he had allowed himself to be swayed by the influ-

ence that a keen, powerful mind exercises over one clouded by passion. A Scot, and in the service of the loyal Earl of Huntly, he had remained mute while he heard a subject discussed in his presence that nearly concerned the rights of the Scottish Monarch; he had not only left to another the burden of the defence, but had permitted his own silence to be used as a weapon against the cause which he should have supported.

No sooner had the opportunity fled, than he formed a hundred resolutions to redeem his error—in this mood Dalton determined not to leave his side, and thought it preferable to remain and listen to his violent upbraidings, rather than suffer him to act according to the impulse of the moment.

“What will be said of me?” repeated Sir Ronald, for the twentieth time, “when it is known that I sat mutely by, while the acts of my sovereign were called in question, and his name vilified in my very hearing? I could brain myself for my folly.”

“Your interference was unneeded,” said his companion, soothingly. “Lord Hamilton had stepped forward as champion. I thought to have received his blade in my breast. Was not the slanderer, meaning myself, publicly rebuked? Does not that content you?”

“That any other should have sustained the rights I was most bound to uphold, but adds to my discomfiture. I have belied my own honor in failing to defend that of my king. And you, false Southern traitor, after whispering your scarce comprehended counsel that I should not oppose your views, how dared you comment on my unwilling silence, and turn it to your advantage, to my most eternal shame.”

“Nay! be not deaf to reason,” replied Dalton, quietly. “You are chafed lest you should chance to lose favor in the eyes of James by what has passed this night. Tush! ’tis in the wording of a tale that true discretion lies—I will guarantee that you shall suffer nought when the affair is

duly represented—you will say that the debate began to wax warm; and when you were about to express your sentiments in plain and manly guise, Lord Hamilton broke forth in such intemperate strain as drew on him a well-earned reproof from the Prince of York; you saw the cause was then lost without remedy, and so the matter ended.”

“But so it will not end,” exclaimed Graham; “and you know very little of James Stuart when you say this. Had the Bastard Heron been delivered into his power, the case might have been different; but now his wrath will fall on every one concerned in the evasion.”

“You are certain of this,” observed Dalton with an evident appearance of satisfaction.

“I tell you his ire will be fearful to witness; and, by Saint Andrew! you seem to rejoice thereat. Would that the base-born Chief had been slain in the fight, and then I had avoided so foul a dilemma. Even

now I have half a mind to seek Richard of York, and disclose to him my sentiments on the question—he might act as he listed—I should stand acquitted.”

“Recollect yourself,” said the Englishman in a low tone. “Did you not once before, at Holyrood-house, assist the Bastard Heron to quit the palace, when he bore away your liege’s signet ring, and other important matters. I do but mention the circumstance to remind you that although it has been hitherto concealed, some accident may bring it to light, and the discredit then would be tenfold worse than the loss of favor now.”

“Caitiff! would you betray me?” cried Sir Ronald, springing at the other’s throat—but Dalton’s watchful glance enabled him to step aside in time to elude the grasp, and he remained in an attitude of apparent indifference, while the infuriated Scot poured forth a torrent of invective.

He bitterly reproached his companion for having led him into his first involun-

tary error, with the exposure of which he now menaced him, and cursing him as his evil genius, demanded why he always interposed with his destructive counsels to guide him into a course that must terminate in the ruin of his reputation. While he spoke, Dalton's bright, inscrutable eyes were fixed upon him much in the manner of one who seeks to tame some ferocious animal, and when the young man paused rather from lack of breath than from having exhausted his displeasure, the Englishman said, coolly,

“Go to! you speak like a madman. Seek, if you will, the Prince of York, and make to him what disclosures you will, I threaten you not. It is on Richard's head I would have your Monarch's anger fall—James Stuart will soon abandon this enterprise in disgust—Listen to me for a few moments, and I will prove to you that the road which will lead me to the attainment of revenge, may also open a prospect to

yourself for the accomplishment of your dreams of love."

And then with low, persuasive voice, and subtle reasoning, Dalton discoursed with his companion until they were summoned to their hour of duty at the barbican, where the leaders themselves held watch in turns, lest the worn-out sentinels should neglect their charge.

CAPTER XI.

REMONSTRANCE.

This fester'd point cut off, the rest rests sound ;
This, let alone, will all the rest confound.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE day had scarcely begun to dawn when Father Hubert was in waiting before the Adventurer's tent, after a little delay he was ushered into the interior, and there was apprised that the master had been ab-

sent for some time. The whole encampment was astir, and presented a scene of considerable activity—the Burgundian men-at-arms were assembling round their Captain's pennon, and the sloping plain was alive with men. Anxiously the priest looked forth on the busy throng—the eastern sky foretold the approaching sunrise, still Richard came not.

On the previous evening orders had been issued, that a herald should be in readiness to carry to the Heron's Haunt a summons for the surrender of the place, and an enumeration of the terms on which it could be effected. As the minutes rapidly flew by, it seemed to Father Hubert that the Pretender had designedly avoided the conference, in order that he might act according to his own inclinations, unshackled by any reference to his friend's counsels. The priest had not uttered a word during the debate, for he invariably abstained from any appearance of taking an undue part in secular affairs, added to which, he knew

well the inutility of proffering advice on that occasion, since Lord Hamilton's air of defiance was especially calculated to kindle the determination to resist in Richard's haughty spirit. Sufficient time had now elapsed for the contending passions of all parties to have sobered down, and Father Hubert was resolved to represent most fully the danger of offending King James, and the evil consequences that must result therefrom.

After a tedious hour passed in silent expectation, the Adventurer came at last. With a gay step, and light heart he entered the tent, for his thoughts were full of the triumph he had won, the deep devotion of his lovely bride, and the hope, that in a course of future successes he should reap the fruits of his present victory. His bold face fell somewhat as he recognized the priest, and recollected that the probable cause of his visit was to induce him to alter plans which he had determined not to relinquish.

“Ever on the alert, good father,” he exclaimed, clearing his brow; “there is not a captain in our host whose zeal and vigilance can equal yours. Myself I have oftentimes been shamed by your example.”

Father Hubert advanced, and returned the greeting without the slightest sign of impatience being visible.

“I am here, my son,” he said, “in compliance with an appointment made by yourself; I sought you yester-evening to confer on divers matters of serious weight, and there is one more especially whose fulfilment is so close at hand that it demands instant attention.”

“Say on,” answered the young man, carelessly, throwing himself into a seat.

“I would urge on you,” said the priest, the impolicy and madness of arousing the King of Scotland’s enmity by so marked an inattention to his will, on a question of such small magnitude. I would warn you that the course you contemplate may be the means of withdrawing from you the

main support on which our enterprise rests."

"Not so," returned the Adventurer, "we differ on the wisdom of the measures you would have me to adopt. I will grant that James's friendship may grow lukewarm at the apparent slight; but has he not already injured our cause beyond repair by his stubborn disregard of my interests in the pursuit of his own ends—has not the aspect of his Scottish array prevented the mass of the peasantry from gathering to our Standard—I am assured on all sides it is so—and may not this single act of clemency attach a thousand bold hearts that would have rebelled from cruelty and oppression?"

"There will be other opportunities," persisted the confessor, "for the display of this popular virtue; it would now bring ruin in its train; I do entreat you, consider this thing well."

"I have done so, and to me it seems not desirable to rely abjectly on the force of

our northern ally—in former times I have been taught from your own lips to expect there was a spell syllabled in the sound of York, whose name I bear—with what title you best know—that at the word a loving people would spring to arms, and bless their liberator—'twould he far better to throw myself defenceless on the English than to remain a spiritless pensioner on the bounty of a foreign Monarch. I will not become a helpless instrument to be moved at another's beck. If I ever wield a sceptre, the hand that grasps it shall not be directed by another's pleasure—if I live to wear a crown, the head it encircles must plan and scheme and work out its own designs, without dictation from any mortal power—I would not hold an empire on such terms."

"Be not over warm, my good lord," replied the priest, "in order that you may attain the uncontrolled position you would aim at, you must follow counsel now. I would compel you to that which will tend to

to your well-being in your own despite. Take time for consideration—pause—lest repentance should come when it is too late.”

“It is indeed too late,” said the young man, slowing rising, and pulling aside the curtain of the tent which had before been partially closed. “When I passed along but now, I gave directions that the summons should be made without further delay. Look yonder!

There was a motley crowd collected round the entrance of the distant barbican, presently it parted, and a herald issued forth, easily distinguishable from the rest by his armorial coat which glittered brightly with innumerable colours.

“As I came hither,” continued the Adventurer, “I bade Master Dalton see that my orders should be attended to forthwith, and, by my honor! he has made good speed.”

“You cannot mean,” exclaimed the priest,

“that you will give no heed to my remonstrance, you could not have proposed to carry out your proceedings before you hearkened to the advice I was about to urge. I cannot credit it. Should such indeed be the case, it was a slight equally unprovoked and ill-deserved. When did I use my influence for any other motive than your aggrandizement—when did I covet the semblance of power as long as you could secure its reality?”

“I reproach you not,” returned the Adventurer proudly, “but leave me my freedom of action; the ills that my conduct may invoke will alight on my own head. I do not brook such close questioning—yet since it pleases you to know, I will say frankly that I had designed to act according to my judgment without reference to yours—I had presumed to decide for myself, and sought not counsel I had resolved to reject. Remind me not of the lowly sphere from which I have emerged—call

not my language and bearing unsuitable—you have made me what I am—I owe it to you that I think so seldom of my former state—in deceiving others, I have learned at last to deceive myself. There are times when I fall into a strange forgetfulness of the past—would that I could remain so for ever!” The young man paused, and then added in a milder tone: “Be not angry, Father Hubert, but no needless bloodshed shall ever cause the people of England to rue the day I crossed their Borders—’twould have dishonored me in the sight of our host, had I abandoned the merciful intent I had been so forward to proclaim. In this instance I have taken my own course, but in other matters I promise you shall not find me headstrong. Will this content you?”

During the above speech a close observer might have marked that the priest was no indifferent listener; at one moment his eyes sent forth a gleam of irrepressible light, his countenance became perfectly colourless,

and his breast heaved with the struggle of the conflicting feelings within. But even in the height of passion he recognized the futility of opposition, the danger of dissension; he felt that by present submission he might acquire a larger share of power hereafter; with a mighty effort he regained his self-command, and his features resumed their serenity.

"Be it as you say," he replied, gravely bending his head; and quitting the tent, he passed into the outer air. Mechanically he returned the respectful salutations of the soldiers. Hitherto he had maintained an unseen but most material ascendancy over the Adventurer's actions, and stung to the quick was he at the discovery that any other had obtained an influence, however momentary, of superior weight to his own.

Such a supposition he could hardly endure with patience.

"Who is this Dalton?" he thought to himself, "who thrusts in his advice to intercept the accomplishment of my designs?"

'Tis the same man who was so forward to foment the discord with Scotland—what can be his motives. 'Tis evident he hopes to supersede my power over Richard who affects his counsels. It chafes me in truth, thus to be set at defiance by the audacious boy I had trained so heedfully to do my bidding; but I will tame him yet, though at the moment I dared not urge him further, lest, in his stubborn mood, he should throw up all rather than yield the point. He says truly that I have made him what he is, but he o'ertops his part when he enacts the King with me. He has a towering pride—I dislike not that, it is a weapon that rightly used may be turned to much account. Who could recognize any traces of the base-born artizan in the noble mien of the disinherited prince fighting for his crown? Ne'er a Plantagenet of them all bore a haughtier spirit."

Thus mused Father Hubert, however he was not long allowed to pursue his cogitations uninterrupted; and gradually he

found himself surrounded by a troop of youthful squires and experienced knights, who all entertained a most profound veneration for his judgment even in military matters.

Meantime the herald had wended his way to the Heron's Haunt, and after some slight pause, the high embattled gates were flung open, and he made his entrance ; after a little demur, the men-at-arms who attended him were likewise admitted within the walls.

The English, for the most part, were deeply gratified at the prospect of a capitulation, for it was most repugnant to their feelings to renew a contest with their countrymen, which must inevitably terminate in a general slaughter. On the contrary, the foreign mercenaries were tolerably crest-fallen to discover there was no hope of sack and pillage, although their high state of discipline prevented any signs of discontent being openly manifested ; while the Scots were naturally indignant at not

being allowed to carry on their just feud with the Bastard Heron.

At the expiration of a short half hour, the herald returned, and was conducted with due ceremony to the Adventurer's tent, where the leaders had again assembled. As will be readily imagined by the reader, from his insight into the position of the besieged, the terms proposed, so far beyond their most sanguine expectations, were instantly and joyfully accepted: every living soul in the fortress was to have free permission to depart unmolested—the Border-riders were to retain possession of their horses—the rest of the cattle were to be left for the disposal of the victors; and at noon it was stipulated that the castle should be formally surrendered into the hands of Richard of York.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SURRENDER.

Then long and loud the victor shout
From turret and from tower rung out,
The rugged vaults replied ;
And from the donjon tower on high,
The men of Carrick may descry,
Saint Andrew's Cross, in blazonry
Of silver, waving wide !

SCOTT.

As the hour drew near for the surrender of the Heron's Haunt, very various were the sensations that prevailed among the inmates. The chief himself, who had de-

terminated to lay down his life for the ransom of the rest, was thunderstruck at the unexpected generosity of the Adventurer, and if anything could have shaken the firmness of his loyalty to the house of Lancaster, the present act of clemency was well calculated to do so; from that moment he ceased to speak of the false impostor who had usurped a title to which he had no pretensions; henceforth he invariably mentioned Richard of York with the deference due to his exalted birth. It must not be inferred from this that he was disposed to adhere less staunchly to the cause of Henry VII., but simply he could not disbelieve that one who showed himself so tender of his father's subjects, was any other than the true son of the Fourth Edward.

“A mere Pretender,” observed the Chief to Viola, when he recounted to her the occurrences of the morning—“a mere Pretender would only regard his personal interests, whatever might be the risk to others; a man, whose lying tongue had carried on

so wide a system of imposture, must be incapable of aught noble or generous. I can no longer doubt he is the lineal descendant of York, miraculously preserved, but that gives him no claim to the throne his sire unlawfully won. Moreover, his resemblance to Edward is marvellous."

"You have then had opportunity to observe him closely?" enquired Viola, whose foreign education had made her indifferent to the contentions of the rival roses, while she could not avoid sympathizing with the career of a youthful prince, who had witnessed such singular reverses of fortune.

"At the onset on the postern," replied John Heron, "we met hand to hand; his helmet became unbuckled, and afforded me a full view of his countenance. It is scarcely possible now to discredit his identity. He is a gallant youth, and a little more experience in the field will establish his repute as a formidable swordsman. I grieve for the poor cavalier; unless a chance shot lay him low, the block or the gallows

will probably terminate his course—a fate not unlike my own.”

With a bitter smile the Borderer hurried away to the performance of his remaining duties. It cannot be supposed that he could abandon his castle to a stranger without manifold regrets, but mingled with these was a stern joy, that by the sacrifice he could contribute to the safety of the fair being, who had inspired him with a passion as uncontrollable as it was disinterested. His followers did not share his secret subject of gratulation, and were consequently even more alive to the shame of the capitulation; in their judgment, life was hardly a sufficient compensation for the ignominy of the part they had been called on to perform.

The mid-day sun rode high in the cloudless heavens, when according to agreement the Border band were all assembled in the outer court, a fierce and desperate troop, scarcely one of whom had escaped unwounded. They had been permitted to

keep possession of their horses, but their arms were collected in a vast pile in the centre of the quadrangle, and were to be delivered up to their conquerors.

Each of the Border-riders leaned sullenly on his horse, awaiting what was to come next, with an assumed appearance of apathy which might have deceived an ordinary spectator. Father Paul did not see occasion to dissemble his genuine satisfaction at the turn affairs had taken; however his face and figure had lost both color and rotundity during the siege, and right anxious was he to quit a spot where he had endured so much bodily apprehension. The old man, Osbeck, was also there, cowering timidly among the athletic forms that contrasted so strongly with his own spare and feeble frame.

A rough sort of litter was in readiness to convey Viola and Janet from the fortress; the latter stood tearfully listening to the whispered discourse of Giles Hurst, who had found means, in her affliction, to win

favor in her sight, and had obtained a promise that she would become his wife, in utter disregard of the pretensions of the weaver of Carlisle.

Viola had stationed herself somewhat apart from these acknowledged lovers ; the dangers she had undergone could not prevent her feeling the painful embarrassment of her forlorn position, solely dependent on a protector whose admiration had been so recently expressed. However great her gratitude to the Border Chief, she entertained an invincible repugnance to abide longer under his guardianship, and privately resolved to seek temporary shelter at the first convent they might have occasion to pass.

John Heron had mounted his horse, and stationed himself at the head of his troop, and even while engaged in making the necessary arrangements for departure, his eye continually reverted to the spot where Viola Hatherton stood.

With trumpets sounding, and banners

flying, the Adventurer advanced, shortly after noon, to the Heron's Haunt ; the principal body of his forces remained outside the walls, and were ranged in two long files, through which it was intended the Border-band should pass on their evacuation of the castle.

A picked detachment had been selected to attend Richard on his entrance. At the heavily barred gates he halted, and dismounted, as did also the Lady Katherine, who had been persuaded to accompany her husband, and bear a part in the triumphal procession assembled to take possession of his first conquest in the land over which she believed his sires to have reigned.

When the wide portal was flung open, in obedience to the herald's summons, and she caught a glimpse of the grim Borderers within, who bent stern looks of defiance on their victors, she clung tremblingly to her husband's arm.

"What ails you, Kate?" asked Richard, smiling. "Is it the sight of a vanquished

foe that scares you thus? 'Tis your first campaign, sweet-heart, or custom would take away apprehension."

"Think you there is no chance of treachery among these lawless men?" whispered the lady. "It seems not unlikely that they should take us at unawares, and endeavour to regain the fortress by violent means."

"Yonder lie their arms," replied the Adventurer, pointing to the enormous pile before them. "Moreover they are brave men all, and such are not commonly reputed traitors—the Bastard Heron has given his word for an honourable adherence to the terms agreed on, and his pledge will not rashly be broken."

"Yet he slew Sir Robert Ker on a day of truce," said Katherine, somewhat pointedly.

"Stir not up the ashes of a feud that has smouldered for the present," answered the Pretender. "Yonder is the Chief, on horseback in the front of his band—his is a

face to repel distrust—I would pawn my life on the honesty of his intentions.”

While the above observations were being made, the party had advanced into the court, surrounded by their more immediate followers. It had been pre-concerted, that when the conquerors reached the inner court, the Borderers were to commence their march from the Castle. At a signal from the Chief, the men who had been appointed to bear the litter hurriedly gathered round it, and Viola and Janet held themselves in readiness to assume their places therein. The eye of the Lady Katherine chanced to fall on the group, and she could not avoid being forcibly struck by the singular loveliness of Viola's features, covered, as they were, with a vivid blush at the idea of finding herself in so extraordinary a position, and yet withal she displayed a calm self-possession even in her modest bashfulness.

“Look, my dear lord, is not that dark-eyed girl of most rare beauty?” cried the

lady to her husband, whose attention was at the time directed towards the fallen postern—which point had been so stubbornly disputed on the previous night—when he turned in obedience to her summons, a sudden movement among the Borderers intercepted his view of the desired object. “Can she be the daughter of one of these common freebooters?” continued Katherine. “She has not the air of a Border maiden; perchance she is detained here by force, and might gladly welcome an offer of protection. I would learn if I could be of service to her. Hark’ee, Lintorf!”

An attendant was forthwith despatched to Viola’s side—she listened to the messenger in some surprise, and raising her downcast eyes, they encountered a kind glance from the Lady Katherine, who gently made a gesture for her to approach. Viola Hatherton timidly complied. Her ready discernment instantly told her that the lady was of elevated rank, and she stood before

her in an attitude of graceful submission. Katherine looked round for her husband to ascertain if his judgment did not coincide with her own as to the damsel's personal appearance, but he was once more engaged in discourse with some of his captains, and without interrupting him she proceeded to address Viola.

"Young maiden," she said, "I scarcely expected to find one like yourself in this rude frontier fortress; and more especially in such strange companionship. Can my power avail you aught? Perhaps you have been lured here against your will, or do I altogether err in my opinion? It may be you are near of kin to the Border Chief."

"No! Lady, I am an orphan," answered Viola's low sweet voice.

"Is it indeed so? and has the Heron held you in his towers in opposition to your wishes?"

"He has been to me a most noble friend and protector," replied Viola, her cheek colouring deeply with her earnestness to ex-

plain the truth. "By an unhappy accident my father was wounded mortally, and conveyed to the Heron's Haunt, where he shortly breathed his last. During the siege I have been compelled to remain within the walls for safety's sake, and am now only anxious to seek retirement in some convent shade where I may no longer be a burden to others."

The Lady Katherine had marked her rising blush, and misinterpreted its meaning; she glanced towards the manly figure of the Border Chief, who eyed the group with evident uneasiness.

"Perchance," she said, smilingly, "I may be accounted over officious in my proffer of service; he who has already befriended you may have won sufficient favor with you to render his further guardianship acceptable.

"Not so, honored dame," exclaimed Viola, eagerly. "If any other alternative presented itself, most gladly would I accept it. I have no interest in that warlike hand be-

yond gratitude for the generous kindness of their chief—I have no choice but to travel under their escort—I am a stranger, and friendless.”

“Say not this,” interrupted Katherine. “Could you point out a way, I would fain aid you. We are marching southward, and if you would wish to wend the same road, and my protection would avail you, it will please me well that you should join us; my handmaids will see that you lack for nought.”

“Thanks, noble lady, most gratefully do I accept your kindness.”

And Viola, springing forward, pressed to her lips the hand of the queen-like Katherine. While she rendered this simple act of homage, Richard disengaged himself from those around him, and advanced to the side of his wife. What occasioned the perceptible start that ran through every fibre of his frame as he reached the group?

Viola had raised herself from her stooping posture, and stood once more erect,

when on a sudden her gaze became fixed, a rich glow suffused her whole countenance, and then a sunny, joyous smile lighted up eyes, cheek, and lip, giving an unwonted expression to her usually pensive features.

“Tell the damsel, my Kate,” said the Adventurer, turning to his bride, “that Richard of York holds himself bound to defend the helpless, and when he comes into his own, no harm shall touch those under the shade of the White Rose.”

Viola now looked round her with a bewildered air, as though the Pretender's words awoke her from some happy dream. The Lady Katherine did not fail to inquire into the cause of her singular emotion.

“I fancied, lady, that I saw one whom I recognized,” answered the maiden, sadly and humbly, “but I now perceive my error.”

As she said this, she raised her hands, and unclasped the golden chain that always encircled her slender throat; at the same moment the Adventurer spoke again, and

the sound of that voice seemed to possess power to rivet her every sense to catch its last echo; the chain dropped unheeded to the ground, and presently Osbeck darted from the throng, pounced upon it, and bore it off, unobserved by any.

The Pretender had pointed out that there was another female figure in the vanquished band, and Katherine instantly summoned Janet to draw near. Giles Hurst had a care to follow her movements at a little distance. The Lady's assurances of protection were declined by the maid of the mill with some almost inaudible expressions of thankfulness, as she glanced towards the spot where Giles stood.

"Be it as you list," said Katherine kindly, "but I pry'thee tell the Heron that we propose to relieve him of one serious charge—yon pretty maiden desires to quit so unsuitable an escort, and has willingly consented to abide with us for the present.

Janet turned somewhat indignantly from

her former friend, on finding that this statement remained uncontradicted; and in a few minutes the message was delivered to the Border Chief, who had been a watchful spectator of the above scene, and intuitively comprehended its meaning. He bowed his head in grave acquiescence, and bade his Border-riders follow him at their best speed. Then without glancing towards the ungrateful maiden, who was content to part with so slight notice, he plunged his spurs deep into his horse's flanks—the animal sprang forward, thundered along the court, crossed the drawbridge, and dashed through the files of the victor host, bearing the Borderer for ever from the Heron's Haunt.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONFEDERATES.

Arise is he arm'd, that hath his quarrel just ;
And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

Shakespeare.

VIOLA Hatherton had not witnessed the departure of the Chief without an attempt to address him and soften, to the best of her power, a separation which she knew he would feel most keenly—when she saw him

urge his steed forward, his name had escaped in a loud cry from her lips, but in the general tumult it failed to reach his ear, and in another instant it was too late to recal him. The Lady Katherine commended her to the care of her attendants, and then the conquering party entered, and took possession of the lone old castle. Orders were immediately given that as many troops as could be admitted, should be quartered in the stronghold, and the remainder encamped without the walls. Richard had saluted his bride, and welcomed her to their first conquest on English land; he had received the dutiful homage of the Yorkist leaders, and surveyed the state of the fortress and the defences, before he ventured to withdraw to a private chamber, and command the presence of Father Hubert.

“Here is a sad mischance,” murmured the young man to himself, as he paced the narrow chamber. “Poor Viola! who could mistake the beam of joy that shone in her

eyes—her look of glad surprise as she recognized the Perkin Warbeck of other days, while I stood proudly by, playing the prince, though none can guess with what an aching heart. The Armourer's daughter has grown into marvellous beauty—and so the poor old man is dead. What a pitiful, perjured impostor have I become—shall I never again be able to stand erect in the face of day, and act without a mask. Oh! I am sick to the death of this eternal hypocrisy—but here comes my counsellor.

Father Hubert had not been present at the recognition of his pupil by Viola Hatherton, but as he passed through the hall he caught a glimpse of her well-remembered face, and his quick imagination readily supplied the rest, and pointed out the disastrous consequences that must ensue, if the present position of affairs was allowed to continue. To foresee a danger was with the priest to seek a means to avert it; his busy brain was already toiling for this end,

and in an anxious state of mind was it that he repaired to the conference with the Adventurer.

“Tell me,” exclaimed the latter eagerly as they met, “what is to be done in this new emergency? Call up your most powerful spells, for never were they more needed. Viola Hatherton is here; I think, for the present, my cool falsehood deceived her, but in another interview I might stand detected.”

“Calm yourself,” said Father Hubert, and say, did the girl, in her amazed confusion, let drop your former name?”

“She uttered not a syllable. I was on the alert to prevent that; well did I practise the trade to which I have been bred. Her first emotion of gladness was visible to every eye, and afterwards, when I spoke in courtly phrase, her disappointment was equally perceptible; yet still methought her ear drank in the sounds of my voice, as if its tones had not been forgotten, and increased her wonder at the singularity of the

resemblance which she fancied had deluded her."

"Something must be devised to remove the girl," answered the priest, "or too frequent communication might occasion discovery."

"I will not see her again," cried the young man decidedly. "I dare not undergo such another ordeal. A word—a glance might betray me. I cannot always wear an aspect as steeled as I have done to-day. You are quick at expedients, good Father—think of something now to extricate us from this labyrinth of difficulty."

"That will be no easy matter," returned the priest. "The damsel is placed under the especial protection of the Lady Katherine, and I wot that she is not readily turned from her object. Woman is ever pleased with a new toy, and Viola Hather-ton has a winning demeanour that will shortly render her a favourite with her patroness."

"Then," exclaimed Richard impetuously

“her life’s history will be told—her father’s apprentice will be duly mentioned—his likeness to myself—his abrupt disappearance—Katherine has a quick wit, and together they will stumble on the truth.”

“Stay,” said the priest thoughtfully; “did there not occur some love-passages between you and the Armourer’s Daughter?”

“Never!” said Richard firmly; and as he noted the smile of doubtful meaning that played round Father Hubert’s thin lips, he continued more earnestly, “on my soul and honour, if I may still be accounted to possess either, I held her dear as a young sister—nothing more—we never exchanged a thought beyond this. Old Hatherton loaded me with benefits, and must have deemed me strangely ungrateful that I left him as I did; would I had been content to abide and earn an honest livelihood, in lieu of entering on this mad career, where death and dishonour are constantly impending.”

“Had you possessed a spirit sufficiently

mean to rest satisfied with such a lot, you might, in course of time, have wived with your master's daughter, provided he could have brought his pride to forget your being a nameless outcast, on the score of your skill as a craftsman—but this is nought to our present purpose. Our great object now is to hinder the Lady Katherine from being made acquainted with your early adventures."

"Save me from that," cried Richard; "and do with me afterwards as you will."

"Our only way will be to devise some expedient for dismissing the damsel from our company—if this is not done summarily, who can answer for the issue?"

There was a long pause, wherein the priest preserved an attitude of deep meditation, and the Adventurer remained with his eyes fixed wistfully on his companion, as if he expected that the next emanation from his brain would discover some mode of release from the threatened embarrassment. Considerable hesitation was exhibited by

Father Hubert before he gave utterance to the idea that was now uppermost in his mind, apparently he seemed half to doubt the wisdom of its expression ; but a furtive glance at Richard's anxious countenance appeared to influence his decision on the subject, and at length he spoke.

“ One course alone remains to us, although it is such as I would not willingly have adopted, but Viola Hatherton must be separated from her protectress, at whatever risk. Hear me, then—I come from Burgundy, and indeed from the very town of Saint Evert—I will see the Lady Katherine, and tell her that light tales have been whispered of the damsel's discretion in her native place—I will infer a hope that rumour magnifies the truth, but will lead the noble dame to believe that I know enough myself to counsel that the Armourer's Daughter should not be admitted among her train.”

As this cold-blooded proposition reached the Adventurer's ear, its atrocious cruelty

was instantly perceived ; notwithstanding the continual system of fraud which he had carried on, his perceptions of good and evil, by nature peculiarly acute, had not been entirely annihilated.

“Fiend in human form!” he exclaimed passionately, when the priest had disclosed his iniquitous plan, “as you value life, breathe not a word against the fair fame of Viola Hatherton—with my last gasp I will uphold her pure as the angels that watch over her virgin dreams—through me shall her good name be blasted? Speak no more of so base a project; rather than hearken to it for a moment I will brave the worst.”

“Then you will have nought to expect but detection in its most ignominious guise—those who now bow with reverence before you, will laugh to scorn the treacherous impostor who sought to flaunt in borrowed honors, but had not wit sufficient to hide his deception. And think not when you appear a convicted cheat that you will

escape the gallows; the followers you have beguiled from their real allegiance will drag you forth, and render you the scape-goat to be offered in atonement for their offences."

"Be it so. I will endure everything in preference to the utterance of so groundless and unmanly a slander."

"The consequences may be fatal; but stubborn as you are, I will make an endeavour to postpone an evil that I may not be able to avert; command yourself in the presence of the damsel, and in the course of a few days I may be enabled to hit on some expedient for her honorable dismissal—until then you must be upon your guard."

The confederates separated in mutual dissatisfaction. The Adventurer felt more and more revolted at his position, as the character of his associate became gradually developed, and he began to ascertain the nature of the stratagems in which at all

times he should be expected to join, in order to ward off a discovery that would involve a failure of their enterprise. Seared as was his conscience, he was resolute, however, not to aggravate its stings by inflicting any injury on others; and little had he originally contemplated the mesh of artifice and deceit that he was about to coil around him, and the variety of interests that had become gradually mingled with his own, rendering it as impossible to retreat from the post he held, as it was difficult to maintain it.

These unpleasant cogitations were interrupted by Maurice Vipont, who had not been present at his master's first entrance into the castle, and had now sought him for the purpose of tendering his homage. Bending one knee to the ground, he touched the Adventurer's hand with his lips, saying, with suppressed emotion—

“Heaven grant your Grace may live to wear the English crown that has never

decked worthier brows, and to wield its sceptre that has never been held by an abler hand."

The Pretender raised his young follower, and felt that among the many adherents who fought under his standard, there was none so likely to show fidelity in the hour of adversity; Vipont thought neither of promotion nor the acquisition of wealth; fealty to the line of York, and personal attachment to the Adventurer were the principal motives that influenced his conduct; the latter was a feeling peculiarly agreeable to Richard, since he could hardly be grateful for an allegiance to which he had no title—although had he calculated more closely, he must have observed that he had no claim even to an affection which he had won under an assumed character, for the possession of qualities which were only worthy of regard as the real attributes of exalted station.

"Thanks, my friend," said the Pretender kindly; "if each good wish that I have

received to-day proceeded from a heart loyal as yours, my inheritance would be less difficult to regain."

"Despond not, my dear lord. There are many true men in bonny England who will yet uphold your rights."

"Their zeal is somewhat of the slackest," returned the Adventurer. "Certes it is not such as was represented to me."

"They will prove themselves less backward ere long," said Vipont, "unless indeed—" here he paused.

"Unless what?" asked Richard. "Speak frankly. How mean you?"

"I would have ventured to suggest that the shedding of kindred blood by the house of York may have served to alienate the good-will of the people."

"Fearful crimes have been committed, and fearfully have they been chastised; but come what may, I believe I have one friend who will not desert me," and Richard laid his hand on the young volunteer's shoulder.

"Your Grace but judges me aright; I am your sworn servant until death."

"Ay! but if I were accused of some ignoble deed, dishonoring alike to knight or peasant—how would it be with you then—could I still reckon on your adherence?"

"The lying witnesses could never palm their false tales upon me," answered Vipont warmly.

"But if the crime were proven to the full conviction of the most partial reason, how would you act in such case?"

"The loyalty that is now my happiness and pride, would then become a duty; and the sword I now draw for the prince I revere and love, would still be unsheathed in the service of Richard of York."

The Adventurer made no reply; with a sigh and a smile he turned away, and ascended to the platform above the keep, where the remainder of the Chiefs had assembled.

CHAPTER XIV.

OSBECK.

Fear not—by heaven he shakes as much
As partridge in the falcon's clutch.

SCOTT.

WHEN the Border-riders departed from the Heron's Haunt, Father Paul mounted his mule, and set forth with the rest, resolved not to be left to the tender mercies of the conquerors; he could not expect to keep pace with the foremost of the band, never-

theless his sure-footed animal contrived to follow in the rear with the feeble and wounded.

As to the old man, Osbeck, no one paid the slightest heed to his movements, and when the coast was clear, he crept stealthily through the gates, and wandered on as long as he was able, until night closed in, when he stretched himself beneath the friendly branches of a huge forest tree, and sank into a heavy slumber, which lasted for some hours. From this he was aroused by a rough shake; the old man opened his eyes with a bewildered glance, and looked around him—the sun had just begun to rise above the distant hills, and he saw two men of savage appearance beside him.

“What are you about, out lying here?” asked one of them. “Come, bestir yourself, and hand over your coin, if you would save your wretched carcase. I have known varlets ragged as yourself, own as heavy a purse as a substantial citizen.”

“Valiant sirs,” answered Osbeck in a voice tremulous with apprehension, “have pity on an old man whose blood can do you no good—these poor garments are all that I possess.”

“We shall not rob you of them, at least, but wait a moment, and we shall soon discover what you are worth.”

The men now drew from their pouches a small heap of gold, with rings of some value, and a few other articles which had evidently been the spoil of some lawless foray. While the freebooters were discussing the value of the prize, and occasionally cross-questioning the old man, their attention was so fully occupied, that they did not observe the approach of a party of Burgundian horse, until it was too late to escape, and soon found themselves hemmed in on every side; they were compelled to submit where resistance would have been unavailing. Without dismounting himself, the leader gave directions that the men should be searched, and the booty was immediately

discovered on their persons; there was, likewise, detected beneath Osbeck's tattered jerkin a golden chain and ruby cross, which in vain, he attempted to conceal. The old man poured forth a succession of piteous lamentations, declaring that he was no comrade of the marauders, but should in another moment have become their victim; however, his exculpation was unattended to, —and, indeed, was not comprehended, being uttered in a language quite unknown to his captors.

The Burgundians had been patrolling the country in order to ascertain if any armed force had congregated in their vicinity—orders had also been issued for the pursuit of certain plunderers who had taken advantage of the unsettled state of the district to commit ravages on both the English and Scottish borders; and, in compliance with these injunctions, the two freebooters had been seized and searched, and the old man discovered in their company, ran a good

chance of being associated in their punishment.

At this critical juncture, another individual joined the circle, whose appearance gave Osbeck a momentary hope of establishing his innocence of the crime imputed to him. This was Father Hubert, who was on his return from a neighbouring monastery, where he had passed the previous night ; his expedition had been undertaken with a view to obtain supplies of provisions and other necessities, under a promise of preservation from all molestation. At the sight of the priest, the old man bounded forward with a cry of pleasure, in the certainty that his tale would now find an interpreter.

Having heard his hurried explanation, the priest turned to the Burgundian soldiers, who, with the reverence usually exhibited to the confessor, informed him that the old man had been found in the company of the freebooters, and there could be no doubt of his guilt, as a portion of his plunder was

concealed in his garments. They pointed to the heap of articles which had been seized by them, and particularly directed the priest's attention to the ruby cross and golden chain, which had been taken from the person of the supposed culprit.

Directly this trinket caught the eye of Father Hubert, he recognised it as the one which his own hand had conveyed, as a farewell token from the armourer's apprentice to his master's daughter. The priest instantly signified his desire to hold a private discourse with the accused in order that he might attempt to elicit some information relative to his accomplices. In compliance with this wish, the confessor was permitted to draw Osbeck on one side, out of earshot of the rest of the party, a precaution which would have been unnecessary, had it not been for the presence of the two English freebooters in the centre of the group.

With a stern frown the priest demanded how the cross and chain had fallen into the old man's possession. It was a long time

before threats or persuasions could extract an answer; and, at length, after disclaiming any connection with the other prisoners, Osbeck owned that, on the foregoing day, he had purloined the jewel from a young damsel who had dropped it in the outer court of the Heron's Haunt.

"What could have induced so bare-faced a theft?" asked Father Hubert. "Was it the mere worth of the bauble; if so, it would appear that you esteem life of little value."

"Indeed, holy Father," stammered the old man, "I meant no harm. The trinket was mine before it was hers—let her deny it if she can. I would not part with the jewel for ten thousand crowns, although I know well what it is to bear both hunger and cold."

"It is then priceless in your sight; what has rendered it so?"

Osbeck replied not, and as the priest scanned more closely the abject features before him, he suddenly called to mind

that the same individual I had addressed him two years previously in the principal street of the small town of Saint Evert, and had enquired the residence of Nicholas Hather-ton—he recollected well having misled him on the subject, rather from the desire to prevent a stranger from overlooking his proceedings, than from a suspicion of what his business might be. This remembrance only served to heighten Father Hubert's curiosity.

“Listen!” said he, “if you are disposed to confide in me the secret that induced you to attach so much importance to the possession of yonder trinket, and the nature of your connection with Master Hather-ton, I will endeavour to obtain your liberty from your captors; I hold some influence over them, and will exert it in your behalf.”

“Should I refuse?” stammered Osbeck.

“Then,” said the confessor briefly, “hope nothing from my intercession—I abandon

you to your fate, and a cord will soon terminate your troubles and your life."

The old man seemed to ponder; the infirmities attendant on advanced age, disease and poverty, had combined to cloud his intellectual faculties, and had left his powers of reasoning at intervals somewhat impaired—such had been the state of his mind when he had sought so eagerly an interview with Viola Hatherton, and afterwards had totally forgotten its object in alarm at the terrors of the siege—however, during the present discourse he had hitherto maintained perfect possession of his mental perceptions, and was merely balancing whether he should retain his secret, or sell it for the purchase of self-preservation. Apparently he decided on the latter alternative.

"Good Father," said he at length, "I am an aged man, and have seen much suffering—I cannot expect to live long, but the remnant of my days is precious in my sight, for I have a vow to fulfil before I quit this world, and I trust to be enabled

to so. My tale can profit you little, but since nothing else can procure your good will, I will e'en unfold it."

"You have chosen wisely," returned the priest.

"When you see me now," continued Osbeck, "mean, wretched, and infirm, it may not be easy for you to credit that I was once wont to sit at the boards of the rich, where the coin from my purse supplied the dainties of which I partook, and I had a care that the loan was repaid with usury. During the greater part of my life a thirst for gold has been the master passion that governed every thought—yet my heart was not all hardened—I doted on my only child with a love which I carefully hid from her, for I feared she would use it as a handle to procure indulgences which I wished not to accord—proud as a queen was my beautiful Maude, and I loved to hear her praised for her comely looks—time wore on, and all things throve with me, until, in an evil moment, I embarked a large

portion of my gains in a venture that met with unexpected failure—an old friend who knew my distress, took advantage of it, and proposed to aid me with his gold, if I would promise him the hand of my young Maude in marriage—her unusual charms had attracted him; glad enough was I to grasp at any means that held out a chance of deliverance—what recked I that he was little formed to win a maiden's favor? his coffers were exceeding full—joyfully I hearkened to the terms he proposed—I commanded Maude to receive the hoary wooer as her future husband—in vain she wept and implored—I spoke harsh words, and pushed her rudely from me as I left her, saying I was about to seek her suitor, and complete the contract of marriage. But even while I repulsed her, my heart bled at my own cruelty, and I resolved that I would abandon my merciless design, and suffer ruin rather than sacrifice my child—at night when I returned home, I found that Maude had wept herself asleep; I did not rouse her to make

knows my change of purpose, but bent over her, and murmured blessings on her slumbering head; if these were not answered, mayhap it was because I did not deserve it should be so; gently kissing her pallid cheek, I placed beside her a ruby cross attached to a chain of fine gold, which her dead mother had always worn, and was dearly valued by us both; I thought that when my child awoke the gift would be to her a pledge of reconciliation—drivelling fool that I was—on the morrow I hurried to greet my Maude, but the cage was empty, and the bonny bird had flown—months elapsed, and I received no tidings of her—meantime I paid no heed to my hoarded wealth, which was rapidly disappearing to liquidate the losses I had incurred in my last unsuccessful enterprise—I had become a poor man, but every thought was directed to the discovery of my daughter—at length I learned she was in London, and had taken refuge with the wife of a worshipful citizen, with whom we had occasionally

transacted business ; need I say that I instantly started in pursuit—how did I find her? I do not often like to recollect those days, but no matter, your honourable pleasure must be served—'tis a merry tale, Sir priest, and we shall laugh together jovially before 'tis told."

The old man paused for a moment; hitherto he had proceeded with his narrative in a calm, deliberate manner, but now his tone suddenly changed—a singularly wild smile played about his shrivelled features, and the light of insanity gave a temporary lustre to his eye, as he resumed—

"Ha, ha! my girl had come to high promotion—a king's leman forsooth—the honour had well nigh driven me mad—those were jolly times when Edward of York would sup at the tables of the worshipful citizens, and if a fair face were seen at the board, mischief would come on't. My Maude was marvellously comely, the dames of the court could not outvie her—yet

sometimes, sirs, methinks 'tis pity that an honest man's daughter should forget the virtue her mother taught her—still a king's pleasure must be fulfilled, although a thousand heart-strings crack for it. So runs the world, but I am old, and do not always judge of things aright."

Father Hubert had noted with anxiety the alteration in his companion's demeanour—he had listened in mute interest to his history, and was most solicitous to obtain the information for the acquisition of which he had prolonged the interview. Apprehensive that the old man should wander farther from the subject, the priest quietly demanded what had become of the chain and cross which he had bestowed upon his daughter.

"Ay! the goodly gauds—they had disappeared, but at last I have recovered them—my dying girl told me with her last breath that she had hung the trinket round the neck of her child."

"What became of the infant?" was the

question that quick as lightning issued from the lips of the confessor.

"Tell me that, good Father," shouted Osbeck, "and I shall die content. The boy was torn from the arms of my Maude a few weeks after his birth, and I swore to her that I would seek him out, if this earth yet held his living form."

"Perchance he is no more," remarked the priest.

"He lives, and I feel that I shall see him before death closes my eyes—for this I have toiled and journeyed until my mind has grown sick as my body. Sometimes they have whispered I am mad—'tis simply that I am bowed down by the weight of honour which a mighty monarch has done my humble house, in casting an eye of favour on my poor girl—I pray you, fair sir, tender him my dutiful homage, and tell him the over great distinction has almost unsettled my wits."

And the old man inclined his body repeatedly to the ground. Father Hubert

scarcely knew how to construe his air of profound humility; there was yet another inquiry he was desirous to make, but he endeavoured most cautiously to veil his solicitude, for Osbeck's aberration of intellect was so momentary that there was always a possibility he would refuse to afford the wished-for information, if he perceived the other was personally interested in obtaining it."

"Your tale is a long one, and moves my pity," said the priest; but the case has no remedy. If you have business with Nicholas Hatherton, your pursuit is fruitless, for he was slain some time since, in a Border fray."

"It is even so. I had discovered that my poor Maude's boy had been sojourning with Master Hatherton, and all hopes of procuring intelligence would have disappeared, had I not by good hap encountered the Armourer's Daughter, and spied the ruby cross in her hands; I stole the trinket from

her, and would fain seek her forthwith, to demand if she knew anything of the fate of my daughter's child. "I should have asked her before this, but memory often halts with me."

There was a pause of some duration. Father Hubert pondered over the facts he had heard, and the extraordinary nature of the revelation to be deduced therefrom. It was hardly possible to perceive, at a single glance, the effects that might be produced on his own designs, by the publication of the tale to which he had just listened.

His reflections were cut short by the voice of Osbeck.

"And now, good father," said the old man, with the shrewd smile of one who had the best of a bargain, "you have learned all—though the recital cannot avail you aught—may it please you to bear in mind that you have engaged to deliver me from the hands of you savage soldiers—I pine for my freedom that I may carry on my pursuit of the boy."

The priest made no reply, but led the way to the large tree beneath whose shade the troop of Burgundians had bivouacked while the conference lasted.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RECEPTION.

The rose of the summer slept on her cheek,
Its lily upon her breast,
And her eye shone forth like the glorious star
That rises the first in the west.

L. E. L.

As Father Hubert, accompanied by Osbeck, approached the party of soldiers, a space was left open to permit them to pass into the middle of the throng. The priest was instantly asked what had been the result

of his examination of the captive; his answer by no means tended to establish the innocence of the accused—he bade the captors hold the slippery varlet fast, since he was in connexion with all the plunderers of the Border, and several important matters would be brought to light by his detention.

At the reception of this hint a cord was nimbly fastened round Osbeck's arms, in spite of his outcries and appeals to his fellow-prisoners to confirm the truth of the account he had given of himself. The two freebooters listened with vast contempt to the old man's vociferous lamentations.

“By Saint Cuthbert!” said one of them, “I am loath that the foreign knaves should think that whining scarecrow to be one of our comrades. I would crave of you, reverend friar, to be our mouth-piece, and tell these gentry that the old fool has no fellowship with us, for we never clapped eyes on his tattered jerken until this blessed morn. His booty may have been stolen

belike, but I should guess he had not heart enough to spoil a hen-coop."

Paying no regard to this observation, the priest merely recommended the Burgundian leader to keep his prisoners apart, and then, with a courteous salutation, quitted the party.

His thoughts were not of the most pleasant nature as he directed his steps back to the Heron's Haunt. He found himself surrounded by difficulties and perils, which continually menaced a shipwreck to the enterprise in which he had been engaged.

In the midst of his manifold anxieties he almost forgot to laud the good fortune which had made him the auditor of the old man's tale.

For the Adventurer's security, and the furtherance of their united plans, it was indispensably necessary that Osbeck should be prevented from holding any communication on the subject of his daughter's child with Viola Hatherton, whose wonder had been already aroused by the resem-

blance of the Pretender to her father's former apprentice; but what means could be employed to deter him from a proceeding on which he was so determinedly bent—and it has been frequently remarked that the partially insane adhere to their designs with a tenacity as marvellous as it is un-deviating. Certainly it might be possible to convey the old man from the country, but this would not hinder him from renewing his pursuit of his grandson, directly he was once more at liberty. The only consolatory part of the affair was that the crime imputed to Osbeck must ensure his temporary incarceration; what was to be his eventual fate remained to be decided.

We will now leave Father Hubert to his meditations and transport our reader to a spacious chamber in the Heron's Haunt; some attempt had been made to give an appearance of grandeur to this apartment, which had been selected as the reception room where the Adventurer's bride was to

admit to her presence the followers of her husband, all eager to do her homage.

Whatever might be lacking in the external decorations, certes the sun that peeped in through the open casement, seldom shone on a scene of greater interest.

In an easy chair, so large that it might almost have served for a couch, sat the Lady Katherine; and never did queen surrounded by her court wear a more regal aspect. A mantle of purple velvet, deeply edged with ermine, fell around her form, concealing only in part its exquisite proportions. On a cushion of enormous dimensions rested her tiny feet, one of which, cased in its braided slipper, was visible beneath her richly flowered robe.

There was no ornament in her abounding hair, that glistened brightly in the sunbeams, and drooped in countless curls over her fair face, as she bowed in gracious acknowledgment of the salutations of the different commanders who had collected to do her honor.

On the back of her chair leaned the youthful figure of Viola Hatherton; she had already advanced into high favor with her protectress; her bands of raven hair, soft, dark eyes, and pensive beauty, formed a striking contrast to the sunny loveliness, and playful expression of feature belonging to the Earl of Huntly's daughter, the happy child of unmixed prosperity, cradled in feudal pomp, and reared in the fostering arms of the most indulgent love—who shall say how long her snowy brow will remain untouched by care, or her silvery laugh retain its joyous note? But we must not anticipate.

Almost all the leaders had paid their obeisance and departed, when the door was once more opened, and Sir Ronald Graham passed into the apartment. He had lingered until the last, that he might enjoy undisturbed the privilege of a few minutes' discourse with the lady of his secret adoration.

“Ha, laggard,” exclaimed Katherine as

he entered, "I had begun to think that you alone would keep aloof, indifferent about receiving my poor thanks for the prowess that lent its aid to achieve our present victory, which, slight as it is, will, I presage, lead the way to successes far more important."

"Dear lady," answered Graham, "could you deem that I should be absent when the homage of the knee was to be offered as a symbol of that of the heart which the daughter of the noble Earl of Huntly, and the kinswoman of James of Scotland, may ever claim from her poor servant, Ronald Graham."

As the young man spoke, he knelt and kissed the hand, matchless for hue and symmetry, which hung carelessly over the carved sides of the massive chair. In that age such an act of knightly gallantry could not be taken amiss, or regarded as a proof of attachment, and Lady Katherine glanced kindly on her young cavalier, as she smilingly replied—

“Nay! if you insist on paying already the honours of royalty to my unworthy person, and forget your early playmate in my future dignity; 'tis as England's Queen I must answer you.”

Sir Ronald had felt that he could kneel for ever, gazing upward on the vision that seemed to possess the power of stealing away his senses; but the lady's last words rapidly disenchanted him, and recalled him to himself.

“Of a truth, madam,” said he, hastily rising, “Katherine Gordon will command my life's blood more freely than the crowned sovereign of Britain.”

“I will not have you disparage the new state to which I hope to attain,” answered Katherine, more seriously than was her wont. “The appanage of power and greatness, will, I confess, be dear to me, for the sake of him who bestows it, and because it will be shared by my dear lord and husband.”

The charm of the interview had now disappeared for Sir Ronald, and after a few further sentences of forced congratulation on his part, he took his leave.

"And now, Viola," said Katherine, as the door closed upon Sir Ronald, "that the ceremony of the reception is over, I will e'en go and seek my Richard, for methinks he has somewhat shunned our company this morning, may-be he wished that I should appropriate to myself the homage of the martial assembly; fie on him for the graceless thought! as if I could be proud of any honour that was not derived from him. But why so grave, fair damsel? I shall not rest content until that subdued sigh has been exchanged for happy smiles."

"Forgive me, honored lady, that I respond not more cheerily to your kindness—judge me not thankless—my trials have been many and sore; give me but time to recover them, and I will try to

prove myself not wholly unworthy of your generous protection—trust me, I will not long cast a shade on your mirthful hours ; and on the day of your coronation, I will engage to wear a gay heart beneath a new kirtle.”

“ See that you keep your promise, pretty maiden, or I will hold you as a traitress to the White Ross.”

And shaking her finger with a playful air of menace, Katherine quitted the chamber to seek her absent lord.

Viola could not look on the altered aspect of things around her, and not call to mind the brave Border Chief, who had distinguished her by an admiration as reverential as it was tender, and whose castle was now the abode of his natural foes.

It was impossible to deny a tribute of regard to the many noble and manly qualities prominent in the character of John Heron ; and, perhaps, had not her youth-

ful fancy been pre-engaged, the Armourer's Daughter might have lent a more favorable ear to the love-plea urged so earnestly by the Borderer—although it must be owned, his warlike exploits and gallant daring did by no means recommend him to her good opinion, and were rather repugnant to her pure and holy mind, which was better formed to appreciate the chivalry of his generous forbearance and self-denial, than to extol the skill and courage he exhibited in the field. However, it was with the most poignant regret she reviewed the circumstances that had occasioned so abrupt a separation, and led her involuntarily into the commission of an act of ingratitude from which her spirit revolted. This apparent negligence on her part was solely attributable to the astonishment which had seized her as she thought she recognized in the Adventurer one whom she had formerly known so well—this for the moment had made her forgetful of all else—since that

memorable interview she had not encountered the Pretender, and she was disposed to regard the matter as an illusion of the senses proceeding from an over-wrought imagination, only to be regretted inasmuch as it had caused her to allow the Borderer to depart, without the utterance of a word of that thankfulness which her heart felt so profoundly.

It may be as well to observe that although Viola's determination to take the veil remained unchanged, the protection of the Lady Katherine afforded her so pleasant a resource, that she no longer looked forward to the seclusion of the convent as a refuge from the necessities and hardships of a world in which she stood friendless, and she had resolved to defer, for the present, the execution of her design.

In such a mood of mind she was accosted by Father Hubert, who sought her, and was glad to have the opportunity of a private discourse with her.

“Damsel, we have met before,” said the priest, closely scanning the meek face of the maiden. “Do you recollect me?”

“Yes, holy father,” answered Viola, on whose memory the person of the confessor had become impressed, as the messenger who had conveyed to her the farewell token of her father’s apprentice, Perkin Warbeck.

Then Father Hubert proceeded to account for his presence in that scene of warfare, stating he had been commissioned by the Duchess of Burgundy to accompany the troops despatched by her to support the cause of her nephew, the Prince of York. Afterwards, assuming an air of the most paternal benignity, he inquired into the future views of the armourer’s daughter, and seemed well pleased to learn it was her purpose to immure her graceful girlhood within the walls of a convent. Applauding highly her resolution, he next admonished her not to tarry in carrying out so worthy an intention, volunteered his aid to obtain

her instant admission to the convent she eventually intended to enter, and promised that her safe journey thither should be his own care.

Viola quietly intimated, in reply, that she could not quit her benefactress so suddenly, having engaged to abide in her service for the present, and she, therefore, felt herself compelled to reject the priest's advice.

"Is it even so, maiden," said the confessor, sternly. "I fear much that the gauds and vanities around you, have already corrupted your soul, and infected you with the leprosy of earth-born folly. Trifle not, I enjoin you, with the spiritual blessings vouchsafed to you—delay not to pursue the design you have so piously formed, or you may, finally, be deterred from doing so. Answer not now; on the day after the morrow, we will speak further on this matter, and, I trust, your reply will be such as my judgment and your own conscience may approve."

Viola bowed her head silently at the

priest's rebuking voice, but even her gentle spirit could not acquiesce in the arbitrary dictum which was to abridge the time that remained to her for the enjoyment of the life, animation, and gaiety of this active world.

CHAPTER XVI.

RECOGNITION.

Lulled in the countless chambers of the brain,
Our thoughts are linked by many a hidden chain.
Awake but one, and lo, what myriads rise !
Each stamps its image as the other flies !

ROGERS.

MESSENGERS had been despatched by the Adventurer to the army that King James was leading southward, in order to apprise that Monarch of his capture and occupation

of the Heron's Haunt; also to learn, authentically, if any hostile force had yet been encountered by the Scots.

It had become an object of marvel that no enemy had, as yet, appeared; sufficient time having elapsed since the invasion, for Henry VII to have assembled a warlike power that should have checked the movements of his foes. The Pretender, by the advice of his council, had decided to abide at the fortress until the return of his messenger from the camp of the King of Scotland, principally with a view to recruit his troops from their recent fatigues. The strictest injunctions were issued for the soldiers to forbear from harassing the peasantry by any unnecessary exactions, or annoying them in any manner; and the severest punishments were to be awarded to those who disobeyed this mandate.

Notwithstanding the repression of all license, many additional adherents were not found to flock to the standard of the young Adventurer, which was in some

measure to be attributed to his coalition with the Scots ; for national animosity among the frontier men far outweighed all feelings of hereditary veneration for the Yorkish cause. The latter sentiment had gradually abated in fervour for lack of a leader in whom to concentrate their hopes, while the former was continually kept alive by renewed acts of aggression.

With regard to the Scottish commanders, whatever might be their zeal during the season of active warfare, they inwardly chafed at the many restrictions now imposed upon them, and looked forward with impatience to their junction with their own countrymen. Such, however, was not the case with Sir Ronald Graham, who had his own object of interest in the expedition, from whence his thoughts seldom wandered.

Shortly after the interview mentioned in the last chapter, the young Scot chanced to encounter on the ramparts his English friend, Master Dalton.

"So," said the latter, with a sort of cynical smile; "I find you have been following the fashion of the rest, and bowing the knee to the idol of the hour."

"Rather like the poor insect that flutters round the lighted flambeau, I am unable to remove myself from the flame that consumes me," answered the young man dejectedly.

"And the lady of your love—does she seem sensible to your homage?" asked Dalton.

"By my honor!" returned Sir Ronald, "sometimes she smiles so sweetly on me, and looks so winningly fair, that I am tempted to forget her wedded state, and swear at her feet that I love her, and her only—when in the very midst of the illusion I am flung from my pinnacle of bliss, by the Lady Katherine's perpetual reference to the Prince of York—then I quit her abruptly, half maddened with my own infatuation."

"Think you of a truth that if no other

claimant to her faith had existed, the White Rose of Scotland would have been content to bear your name?"

"I must avow my secret conviction," answered the cavalier, "that in time my devoted tenderness would have met its rich reward—she could not have resisted my fervent attachment—even now I dream that she is not indifferent to me."

"It may be as you say, but the heart of woman is an enigma not easily solved."

Any answer was precluded by the approach of Lord Hamilton, who had come to bestow his weariness on his countryman. Dalton presently withdrew, for he usually affected solitude, and mingled not ordinarily with his fellows.

Another day had elapsed, and the Adventurer's young wife occupied once more her favorite seat in the spacious reception room—the chair was drawn close to the open casement, and the balmy airs of summer entered thereby—not expecting any intruders, she was attired in a robe of

simple white, and so fresh, and fair, and pure did she look in her unadorned loveliness, that in sooth it seemed a pity she should ever exchange that unpretending garb for a more courtly boddice, or that her lot should be interwoven with the chances of war, and the fate of kingdoms. Viola Hatherton sat on a stool at her feet, and answered the questions of her lady relative to her own history.

“Believe me, pretty one,” said Katherine, “your troubles have now ended; here you may rest in safety. Talk to me no more of convent walls or monastic vows, I charge myself with your future fortunes, and will have a care that you are well dowered and worthily wedded. Ah! Viola, how unceasingly do I thank heaven for having united my fate to that of my noble husband—little did I think when I accepted the Prince of York in obedience to the command of my sovereign, that my own happiness would be so amply secured by my compliance.”

“Dear Lady, it must indeed be bliss to find yourself matched with the object of your first affections.

“Ah! you say truly. My Richard is a lineal descendent of his ancient line; he has a royal heart, and proud am I that the key of so rich a treasury is in my keeping. It may be, Viola, you are too young to give much thought to these matters, but the day will come, I trust, when I shall see your destiny as happily fulfilled as mine.”

The Armourer's daughter cast down her eyes, and a slight flush spread over her delicate cheek. At this moment the door was flung open, and the tall, stately figure of a young cavalier stood at the threshold; he was about hastily to withdraw on descrying the occupants of the chamber. The Lady Katherine sprang forward.

“Nay! my dear lord, we part not company so soon; you have played the truant over long—I am jealous that you give so large a portion of your time to state affairs. Here, Richard, is the captive of my bow

and spear," pointing to Viola, "and I will engage that she shall become a right royal subject in return for your puissant protection."

As Katherine spoke, she laid her hand caressingly on the damsel's downcast head, thus detaining her on her lowly seat from which she would fain have risen, out of a feeling of deference to the supposed rank of the new-comer. With a faint smile at the sportive observation of her protectress, she raised her soft eyes, and fixed them on on the Adventurer. Was it a dream—or the workings of her ill-governed fancy? There stood once more before her the idol of her youthful love—Perkin Warbeck—her old father's valued apprentice. The features were the same, and their only alteration was such as the progress of years might have been expected to produce. The proportions of the person had enlarged, but continued to retain the appearance and grace of early manhood. Still as her troubled gaze met his own careless,

unrecognizing glance, as she noted the elevated expression of thought, the mark of intellect impressed on his spacious brow—the refined dignity that pervaded every movement, and the magnificence of his attire—more than all when she perceived the look of happy affection with which his approach was greeted by his beautiful bride—she could but believe that in a most unaccountable freak of nature, the prince and artisan had been formed in one mould, each the image of the other. Acknowledging the impossibility of explaining the cause of her discomposure, which fortunately had hitherto escaped Katherine's attention, she struggled to subdue the tremulous astonishment which so extraordinary a resemblance had created.

The Pretender was speaking in a low tone to his wife; again Viola started—was it not strange that the similiarity extended even to the voice—and she seemed listening again to that deep melodious organ which

had formerly awoke the sweetest emotions in her gentle bosom.

"Foolish child!" exclaimed Katherine, bending kindly over her. "What causes you to tremble thus? 'Tis your presence, Richard, that affrights her; though I know not why."

"Honored Lady," faltered Viola, rising to her feet with a sudden effort, "forgive my folly—the entrance of His Grace took me by surprise, or I should have been less remiss in paying my duty."

She made a lowly obeisance, and then remained with her arms folded on her bosom, as if to still its tumultuous throbbings.

"You told me truly, my Kate," said the Adventurer, when you averred that your prisoner was worth the capture—nevertheless the young soldiers of our host are so easily subdued by the power of beauty, that I foretell you will soon be compelled to yield your captive to another warder."

This pleasantry caused the colour to

deepen so visibly on Viola's downcast face, that in order to change the theme, Katherine passed her arm through that of her husband, and led him to the casement, directing his observation to the quiet landscape that lay below—peaceful and rural were the sounds that floated on the air—the grasshopper's shrill chirp; the lowing of the cattle on the verdant upland, and the wild song of the speckle-breasted thrush—the whole earth appeared to rejoice in honor of this lovely summer morn.

“Does it not seem a sacrilege for the iron hoof of war to deface so lovely a nook?” observed the lady turning to her husband.

“You must not forget that this castle was erected for the very purpose of defending the frontier,” answered the Pretender musingly—but neither his thoughts nor his looks were fixed on the tranquil scenery. Creeping over the dark dingy walls of the fortress, and growing even across the casement was a sweet white rose, with its luxuriant leaves and dewy buds just opening to

to the light. On this graceful emblem, assumed by the house of York as a badge of their haughty claims, Richard's whole attention was concentrated—how pure and spotless that lovely flower—how stained by this world's most unholy passions was the faction of which it chanced to be the cognizance. Katherine quickly observed the object of her lord's meditations, and imagined what might be their nature, although haply she guessed not their full tenor: with her own bright smile she bade him bring her one of the roses, protesting that she held the flower in a veneration as deep as any true-born Yorkist of them all. In compliance with her request, the young man eagerly stretched forward, and gathered the particular white rose to which his wife had pointed.

“Thus,” said Katherine advancing to take it from his hand, “will I ever wear next my heart the cause of the White Rose.”

A light breeze stirred the leaves of the

flower, and scattering in every direction they fell to the ground. Unlike most of her sex in that day, the lady showed no terror at the evil omen, and laughed gaily, as her lord picked up the leaves, and placed them carefully on the table beside him.

Viola had now perfectly recovered her self-possession, and stood unnoticed while the above scene was taking place—while Richard was occupied in collecting the scattered rose leaves, her eyes accidentally surveyed the hand wherein they were deposited—could she credit her senses? On the hand of the Adventurer, the husband of her high-born protectress, was the identical ineffaceable scar which she had beheld so often on that of the armourer's apprentice—the effect of an injury which the latter had incurred in carrying out some device of old Hatherton's—she could not forget the wound she had tended so unceasingly, and which had first produced any feeling of intimacy between herself and the sufferer—what was she now to believe?—the earth

seemed gliding from under her feet, and she clasped a chair for support. Meantime Richard still leaned thoughtfully over the broken flower.

“Heed it not,” exclaimed his fair wife, smilingly, “I will myself gather a wreath of the half-blown buds, and twine them anon in Viola’s ebon hair, and so shall I crown my conquest.”

Katherine turned to look for the damsel — Viola had vanished.

“Timid as a fawn,” continued the Lady, “the poor child is accustomed to my companionship, but she is easily scared, and it is perhaps natural that she should feel some awe in the presence of her future king.”

“Natural, is it?” said the Adventurer, as he took his wife’s hand in both his own, and he sighed as he embraced her.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PRIEST AND THE ENGLISHMAN.

Love and meekness, Lord,
Become a church-man better than ambition.

SHAKESPEARE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the multiplicity of affairs that engaged Father Hubert's attention, he had not abandoned his suspicions of Dalton, nor his jealousy of a certain sort of ascendancy which the other had contrived to ac-

quire in the counsels of the Adventurer. In fact it was evident to the acute mind of the priest that Dalton's suggestions were usually calculated to foster the pride, and spur into rashness the natural impetuosity of the youthful leader, rather than to promote any ultimate good result to the enterprise itself.

Had the Englishman sold himself for gold to Henry Tudor, and engaged to frustrate the schemes of his companions, and bear witness against them hereafter! Was he a hireling spy commissioned to watch and betray! There was nothing in the appearance of the man to warrant so base a supposition. The closest investigation of the correspondence entrusted to him had not afforded any proofs of foul play. The priest could not even to himself adduce a sufficient reason for the inward detestation and secret repugnance with which he regarded the cadaverous and silent Dalton.

The feeling was unaccountable, and as the confessor was ruminating on the cir-

cumstances under which the latter had joined them, he suddenly descried Dalton himself stretched on the smooth greensward that fronted the principal entrance to the Heron's Haunt. Father Hubert resolved not to lose so favourable an opportunity of engaging the other in discourse, and trusted, with his usual ingenuity, to elicit something that might banish or confirm his doubts. Accordingly he directed his steps to the spot where Dalton was reclining.

His approach was unheard, and he stopped for an instant to examine with curiosity and interest the ruins of the fine countenance before him. The care-dug chasms on the Englishman's hollow cheeks were conspicuous as ever, but his sharp features did not wear their accustomed sullen and sarcastic expression—some softening memory was surely passing across his mind, and left its trace even on the outward man—the impression, whatever its nature, was however such as is written on sand, and which the next wave obliterates—the shadow

of the priest's robe fell upon the grass, and the gloom returned to his brow. He rose hastily.

"My son," commenced Father Hubert, "this is a fair scene for your musings. 'Tis a bright page that nature has opened to our view, and one the most unlearned might read."

"By my troth! holy sir," returned Dalton, "I knew not that the day was balmy, or the scene fair until you spoke of it—all places are alike to me."

"We have each a book within us," said the confessor, courteously, "which the wisest would do well to study. Such, I presume, was the employ of your leisure hour."

"My meditations at least were not such that I should owe you a grudge for breaking in on them—I trust yours may be of a more pleasing complexion."

And Dalton turned as if about to depart.

"Pardon me that I detain you," pursued

Father Hubert ; “but if your time is not already bespoken by some other duty, I would converse with you awhile—an occasion equally favorable may not soon occur.”

The Englishman paused immediately, and finding his companion seemed in no hurry to continue, said, with some impatience—

“I wait your pleasure, good father.”

“To be frank with you,” said the priest, “it is my wish to offer a remonstrance, and I am only solicitous it should be received with the same friendly spirit in which it is made.”

“I hear you, Sir Chaplain,” answered the Englishman, coldly, and his tone did not promise an amicable termination to the conference—without noticing his auditor’s repulsive demeanour, Father Hubert resumed—“I crave your attention but for a few moments. Bound together as we all are in the same confederacy, united by a tie indissoluble as death, since death alone can be the issue of disunion—it is impos-

sible that I should suspect any among us of designedly betraying the rest—such base dishonor would be more foul than midnight murder—a noble enemy would scorn the act—'twould be as though a brother's hand did stab the heart that trusted him—and still—”

“Still what?” interrupted Dalton. “Methinks treachery needs not the comment of big words to make the world loathe its guilt.”

“True,” said the priest, “I fear no treason, and yet the same evil might be done with motives widely different. Unguarded zeal and ill-digested counsels might produce a result as fatal as the traitor's tongue. This it is that I apprehend.”

“Your speech is plain, and points at me, reverend sir ; I am the counsellor you dread.”

“Your quick wit has promptly unravelled my meaning,” answered the confessor. “But I have noted, on more oc-

casions than one, that your suggestions have stirred up strife in our debates, and flung a fire-brand amid the combustible spirits of our host. Doubtless this has not been done with ill intent, and I would not impute such to you, still the effect has been equally inimical to the interests of our enterprise. I would ask that you should sit in judgment on yourself, and say if this is well."

"Impute to me what motive you will," said the Englishman, indifferently, "I care not. Happily I am accountable to Richard of York alone for my actions and opinions. You will find in me no priest-ridden vassal, who wags not his tongue save at the bidding of mother church. I am made of metal less malleable."

Father Hubert perceived that his companion's object was to turn the affair into a personal contention, and consequently took good heed not to accept the gauntlet thus thrown down.

"At least," he replied, gently, "you will

not deny that to your interference may chiefly be ascribed the surrender of the Heron's Haunt, and the release of the Bastard Heron. The wisdom of this measure is yet to be seen, and I am content to abide by the issue."

"But I am not content to be thus traduced for offering to my leader the counsels he had summoned me to demand—to him will I appeal, and learn if he sanctions this usurpation of his power, and permits his followers to be over-awed in the prosecution of their duty."

"Chafe not at my well-meant remonstrance," returned the priest. "It is not always easy to remember that Richard's youthful and haughty spirit requires no incentive to redress a supposed affront, and rather needs the bridle. I fear much that our next despatches from the King of Scotland will prove that we have lost a powerful ally by our late ill-advised procedures."

"You predict but what you wish," re-

torted the other, fiercely. "Henceforth I bid you to know I choose my own course, and your words have less weight with me than the whistling wind."

"It is well—we now understand each other; but beware—you walk on the edge of a precipice; make a false step, and this arm shall hurl you into the gulf below."

And the confessor fixed his calm, searching eyes on the deep-set flashing orbs of the Englishman. The latter turned away from the scrutiny.

"Proud priest, I defy you," said he, as he gathered his cloak about him, and broke abruptly from his companion.

"A traitor! a most double-faced traitor!" muttered Father Hubert. "I could read his guilt in every look and every gesture; he would fain make a quarrel on't lest I should probe him more closely. But I will unmask him yet; still I must be wary, in case he should report his grievance to Richard. The boy is fiery, jealous of his dignity, and would be apt to adopt his

cause. Who would guess how wearisome is the task to guide the unruly, compel the reluctant, fix the wavering, and bear an eye on every point at once; yet he who would attain his ends, must do all this, and more. Had I but tools fitting for my purpose, I would carve out an empire in each quarter of the globe. But I must not dally here longer. This is the hour appointed for my interview with Viola—she must be moulded to my will; and then will I seek my prisoner, the Flemish Osbeck; he must be silenced—but how?”

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MEETING.

Her cheek was saintly pale, as nought
Were there to flush with earthly thought.

L. E. L.

IN the centre of the outer court of the Heron's Haunt stood the young Adventurer, leaning against a heavy mass of stone, which during the late siege had been hurled on the assailants from above. Nearly every appearance of warfare had

been removed, the side postern had been heedfully replaced, and the breaches in the walls repaired, so that the fortress might again be considered tenable; the principal alteration in the outward aspect of things was perceptible in the mien, garb, and discipline of the regular soldiery who now paced the ramparts, and guarded the fortifications, in lieu of the wild Border-riders, whose post they had assumed.

Richard paid little attention to sundry of his followers who were grouped together on the opposite side of the spacious quadrangle, but when Father Hubert glided into the court, intending to traverse it without accosting any one, the Pretender instantly advanced and drew him on one side.

“Have you fulfilled your promise?” he asked. “Have you yet made an attempt to induce Viola Hatherton to quit the honourable shelter that fortune has provided for her, and from whence I would fain expel her? The presence of the poor orphan maddens me—and to double my perplexity

Katherine has taken so strong a liking to the poor damsel, that they are seldom apart."

"Say you so! I was even now on my way to confer with the maiden; but I trow she is somewhat stubborn of mind, and will need menace as well as persuasion to bend her to our wishes."

"She was ever one accustomed to use her own judgment in matters of import, and though docile as a child to her father's will, she was apt to resist oppression, and assert her own power as a free agent."

"We shall see what influence I may exercise, as an organ of the holy church. I will meet you anon, and give an account of the issue."

"I pray your tidings may be such as will release me from my present martyrdom. I fear I cannot endure it longer—an hour ago Viola quitted my wife's chamber, and I have not yet regained the calm possession of my senses."

"Art sure you did not betray yourself?" enquired the priest eagerly.

"Do you doubt the skill of so experienced an actor?" returned the Adventurer with a bitter smile. "I kept so strict a rule over each thought and act that detection was impossible. If the maiden can reconcile her reason to the resemblance which she evidently discovers, hitherto I am safe; but the position is too hazardous to be maintained."

"Believe me, all will go well—but I must not tarry longer—doubt not the business, in my hands, will prosper."

So saying, Father Hubert passed onward. Although he spoke so boldly as to the result of his conference with the Armourer's Daughter, he could not avoid entertaining some slight misgivings when he called to remembrance the gentle firmness with which she had opposed his former arguments.

Crossing the hall, the priest commenced his search in quest of Viola Hatherton.

The guard-room was entirely empty, for its usual tenants had flocked to the inner court to enjoy the fresh breezes of that lovely summer prime.

Opening, at length, the door of a corridor, he descried at the further end the object of his pursuit. Every vestige of colour had fled from her cheek, and bowed with a sensation of shame, her head drooped dejectedly on her bosom; she now knew all—the truth had flashed upon her mind with sudden and irresistible conviction—Perkin Warbeck, her father's apprentice, the loved companion of her girlish pleasures, was converted into the lying impostor who had usurped a regal title, and perjured his soul to attain honour and dignity—the nameless foundling had assumed kingly state, and the frank and skilful artisan had won the wedded faith of the near kinswoman of James of Scotland.

While mentally revolving this most singular change, the priest approached. Viola raised her eyes, which shone not with their

wonted clear, undaunted light: abashed and degraded in her own esteem to discover how unworthy was the idol which had hitherto occupied the altar of her young heart—it is true, the image, now broken and defaced, had been hurled from the pure sanctuary where it was once so fondly treasured, but this had not been accomplished without anguish inexpressible, and traces of the inward struggle were depicted on each lineament of her countenance.

“Fair daughter,” said Father Hubert, noting her air of despondency, and unable to guess its cause, “have you pondered well on the change of life to which your better spirit prompts you, and are you ready to abide by my counsels, and abandon, without delay, the labyrinth of folly and error into which this world leads its votaries?”

“I have thought on what you have said,” responded the maiden, in a low but steady tone.

“And have you resolved,” said the priest, sternly, “to hearken to my admoni-

tions, proffered solely with a view to your welfare, and spend the remainder of your days in piety and good works."

"I have," answered Viola, quietly.

Father Hubert's piercing eye scanned her closely, but there was no sign of vacillation to be read in her pale countenance.

It was as though some mighty armament had been assembled to beleaguer a citadel deemed impregnable, which suddenly was found to yield at the first summons of the besiegers' trumpet—thus the confessor had considered that he should be compelled to bring into play the whole weight of ingenuity of which he was master, in order to overcome the opposition he had expected to encounter from the armourer's daughter—he had arranged his line of argument which was to be backed alike by threats and remonstrances—if he anticipated success, it was not without a serious struggle; and now, much to his surprise, he found that persuasion even was unnecessary, so ready was the maiden's acquiescence in his propo-

sals—struck with wonder, he could only attribute so extraordinary a change of feeling to her dread of his displeasure, and superstitious terror of the authority of the Church—the damsel's evident pallor and distress he imagined to proceed from the reluctance with which she had acceded to his wishes.

Under this impression, he commenced a long exordium in commendation of a decision so wise and beneficial.

“When will all be in readiness for my departure?” demanded Viola, when he had come to a conclusion.

“Early on the morrow. I will be responsible for your safe convoy to the convent you have named—meanwhile, it will be requisite to afford the Lady Katherine some notification of the step you propose to take.”

“I will, myself, open the matter to my honored lady,” answered the maiden, in a subdued voice.

“I can venture to engage that she will

interpose no obstacle to your design. And now, nought remains for me but to beseech the blessing of heaven on your pious intent."

Father Hubert raised his hands in solemn benediction; Viola inclined her head respectfully; and then, with a fleet step, and heavy heart, sought her chamber.

The priest did not pause to note the harassed maiden's haggard look as she turned away; suffice it for him that he had attained his object, and another impediment would be swept from his onward path. But there was still much to be done. Drawing forth his tablets, he wrote a couple of lines to the Adventurer, making known the success of his mission, and desiring to be entrusted with his signet ring for a few hours.

Having summoned a page, he charged him to deliver his missive into Richard's own hands, and afterwards, repair with the answer to his apartment. Father Hubert then glided from the corridor, and passing

down a flight of broken, uneven steps, scarcely lighted by a beam of day, he entered a narrow passage, evidently leading to the damp and dismal cells appropriated, from time immemorial, to the detention of prisoners.

The walls here were of such massive solidity, that the despairing shrieks of the unhappy victims within, could not, by any accident, mar the festivity of the lords of the fortress.

Calling to a sentinel who was vainly endeavouring, from a grated loop-hole, to inhale a breath of upper air, the priest demanded admittance to the dungeon occupied by the Flemish captive. The man instantly brought forth a huge bunch of keys, rusty from lack of use, and then proceeded to seek a torch, with which it was impossible to dispense. When the light was procured, Father Hubert made inquiry if, in conformity with his directions, the old man had been kept apart from his supposed comrades in guilt.

The sentinel answered in the affirmative, and placing the ponderous key in the lock, drew back the bolt—the confessor took the light from his hand—made a signal for the other to retire, and entered the cell, closing the door after him.

Disturbed by the sudden appearance of the light, two or three bats heavily flapped by, and several noisome animals that were sporting about the ground, darted to their holes. The priest looked round for the prisoner, and with some difficulty espied him at last squatted in one corner of the den, his head resting on his knees, and his eyes, glowing like living balls of light, fixed fiercely on the intruder. On the floor beside him was a pitcher of water, and some coarse food which he seemed barely to have tasted.

“I have come, Osbeck,” began Father Hubert, “to have a few words with you, which may even now have power to avert your doom.”

“Are not you the lying priest who swore

aforetime to procure my release, and then committed me to the charge of the grim soldiers who led me hither? 'Tis a poor place, but I bid you welcome to it, and you will find the best of company. I am an old man, good sir, and would gladly have repose—I can not rest o' nights for the rats who gambol about, and play such merry pranks that I cannot choose but crack my sides with laughter—this is too much sport for one of my years, I would fain be quit of it.”

Perceiving the necessity of soothing his companion's mind if he would extract from him any lucid intelligence, the priest offered every assurance of a speedy release from imprisonment, and engaged that he should be permitted to depart unmolested. Osbeck instantly became an attentive listener. Father Hubert then made proposal that the old man should leave the country by the first vessel, and return to Flanders, there to spend the remainder of his days, with ample means to place him above penury—

the only stipulation to be exacted was, that he should never return to England, and should never confide to any living being the history of his domestic troubles—the priest remarked that he need entertain no scruples about relinquishing the search for his grandson, since he had clearly ascertained that the youth was no longer in existence.

“ ’Tis false,” cried Osbeck, violently, “ I have once before been deceived in the matter, and here I swear never to abandon my pursuit of the boy—he yet lives, and I know we shall meet before the grave covers me.”

“ Will it content you if I bring forward witnesses to show that you have been entirely misled, and the boy died when he was a child.”

“ And I too have proofs,” said Osbeck, “ that two years ago he was living as apprentice of Nicholas Hatherton, and I have still the means to track him out—while life lasts, though I beg my bread from place to place, I will not give up the quest.”

“ You say you have proof of this—pro-

duce it, and I shall be ready to acknowledge that my information is nought."

"Ha! are you there with your apt devices?" said the old man, with a cunning smile, "but I see your purpose, and shall not again fall a prey to your arts—you learn nothing further from me, fret and fume as you will—henceforth my secrets are my own."

"Think you not that the rack will have power to wrest the revelation from your lips?"

"Spare me, for the love of Heaven, spare me! I am aged and feeble, and a deed of mercy cannot fail to meet its recompense."

"Make known the truth of what you have said. Show me the evidence that the apprentice of Nicholas Hatherton was your kinsman."

"Did I say I had proof of it? 'Twas but a jest, good Father. My tongue wanders often without a purpose, and my brain grows daily weaker—judge me not harshly

therefore, and if my folly has given offence, I pray you, grant me excuse."

"Are you then prepared," demanded the priest, "to make oath of your willingness to return to Flanders, and to comply with the conditions I have proposed?"

The old man's features lost suddenly their air of childish terror and servile entreaty, and an expression of dogged resolution succeeded, as he eyed his tormentor with a sullen, determined glance, and muttered between his clenched teeth—

"I will never cease to seek the boy, although my life pay the forfeit."

"Then perish in your obstinacy?" exclaimed the confessor, and passing quickly through the door, he summoned the sentinel who replaced promptly the ponderous bolts and bars—Father Hubert then reiterated his commands, that no one should be permitted to hold speech with the prisoner.

"His blood be on his own head! I can

make no further effort to save him," murmured the priest to himself, as he wended his way to the more inhabited parts of the fortress.

CHAPTER XIX.

ESPIAL.

Oft at the silent, shadowy close of day,
When the hushed grove has sung its parting lay ;
When pensive Twilight, in her dusky car,
Comes slowly on to meet the evening star ;
Above, below, ærial murmurs swell,
From hanging wood, brown heath, and bushy dell !

ROGERS.

THE hour was evening. In a green nook,
girdled by a belt of forest trees, whose

towering tops seemed literally leaning against the sky, two individuals, whose persons were partly concealed by their sombre cloaks, had met apparently with the view of pursuing their discourse uninterrupted and unobserved. At some distance, and out of earshot stood an attendant, holding the reins of a couple of powerful chargers.

“And so they have repaired the breaches in the walls, and the old castle scarce looks as if it had changed owners.”

The speaker was a tall, well-built man, and if the reader could glance beneath the folds of that wrapping mantle, he would not fail to recognize the broad breast and sinewy frame of John Heron. He had braved a thousand dangers to compass the present interview, with no other object in view than to make inquiry of the state of things at the Heron's Haunt. With a tenacity which all men sometimes exhibit on points where their passions are strongly interested, and with a wild recklessness peculiar to

himself, the Border Chief had repaired to the trysting-place, regardless even of the train of evils that, in case of his detection, would be entailed on Dalton, between whom and himself a tolerably cordial intimacy seemed to subsist, notwithstanding their apparent adherence to different factions. Still while the Chief spoke on subjects of military interest, the name that was uppermost in his thoughts, and trembled on his tongue, had not escaped his lips.

He longed to learn some tidings of Viola Hatherton, but he experienced no little difficulty in gaining the desired intelligence, without exhibiting his own intense solicitude on her behalf. No sense of her supposed ingratitude had power to extinguish his unalterable attachment, and the principal argument in favor of his affection was one of very frequent occurrence—he loved her because he had served and protected her. It was not until much discussion on other topics had taken place, that the Borderer ventured to ask news of the maiden

from his companion, and even while he did so, a touch of shame for which he could not himself account, tinged his sun-burnt cheek with an unwonted glow.

Dalton had certainly been at a loss to comprehend why the Chief should have demanded so urgently the present meeting, and even now he was not sufficiently acquainted with the circumstances, and moreover was too self-engrossed to form a right judgment on what might be the hidden springs that influenced his friend's conduct.

"The maiden has won great favor with her present mistress," said Dalton in answer to the other's interrogatory, "and I hear a wondrous report of her comeliness."

"You have not seen her then?"

"Not I. The other day the Lady Katherine sat in state to return thanks to her husband's followers for their recent achievements; I like not such fooleries, and had a care to be absent, but I learned from the young gallants there was a new atten-

dant who was a perfect miracle of loveliness."

"And so," said the Borderer, "she was highly thought of by those well-used to look on bright eyes and fair faces."

"Ay! but the court does not always produce the loveliest flowers—nor is it unnatural that the simple attractions of a mountain maid, should charm where the practised graces of far-descended beauties should fail to plesse."

Viola Hatherton was not born on the Borders," observed the Chief; "she has Italian blood in her veins."

"I recollect now to have heard it so said; and our cavaliers swear that her dark eyes have all the melting warmth of her native skies."

"Ha! she smiled on them then?" exclaimed the Borderer, while his knitted brow contracted into a heavy frown.

"John Heron, you are surely distraught," replied Dalton, looking round in irrepressible amazement at the other's agitation.

"Think you I am a man to take note of love-passages between a few idle knights and a roving damsel, whose good mien may be her best possession. But what has come over you so suddenly?"

"It is nought," answered the Chief, "as you say, 'tis folly to calculate for a moment the bent of a woman's will. Let us talk of other matters. You seem accoutred for travel—whither are you bound?"

"To the heart of England. I did but hint to Richard of York the existence of certain ancient gentry, who only needed promises of encouragement to espouse his cause, and straightway he gave me commission to proceed southward to probe their intentions—this is to be the object of my mission—to say the truth, it is not suspected that I shall make so early a departure, but having many ends in view, I thought it wisest to start without delay."

Dalton's account was a true one—since his explanation with Father Hubert, in which both had thrown off the mask of

amity, he had held a conference with the Pretender, and having assured him of the probability that their present gleam of success might induce many of the Yorkists of the midland counties to declare against Henry, he had obtained his leader's sanction to his personal endeavours to enlist them in support of Richard's alleged rights. Not that the Adventurer anticipated that so speedy an advantage would be taken of the leave of absence he had accorded, for although he considered his single mandate sufficiently paramount to warrant such a proceeding, he naturally expected that Dalton would not have taken his departure until time had been afforded to develop its cause to the rest of his advisers.

“By my troth!” cried the Chief, “this young lord of York has mettle enow to take the whole rule of the land on his own head. The Plantagenets were ever wont to rely on their own strength, even while they used the arms of others. A wilful and a

fiery race! and I fear their last descendent will not drop into a bloodless grave."

"You seem of a sudden to assume a tone of tender leniency towards the youth," remarked Dalton with a slight sneer.

"'Tis no treason to Tudor—but I cannot disavow that Richard of York has, by an act of princely clemency, conferred on me a grace that I may never be able to repay—since my life, had he exacted it, would have been ungrudgingly laid down to ransom my people. Heaven send I may live to cancel the obligation!"

"Debts of every kind should be discharged, even to the second generation," said Dalton gloomily. "But it is time we should both be moving," he added after a short pause; "I believe our routes lie different ways, and indeed we should do ill to be seen together—I will but speak a word to my man there, and will return to you in a moment."

So saying, Dalton turned away in the

direction of the attendant who held the horses, and the Borderer, crossing his arms on his chest, pondered on what he had heard.

A sense of the lenient measure with which he had been treated effectually deterred him from any endeavour to regain possession of the Heron's Haunt by a *coup de main*, which feat, under other circumstances, he might possibly have attempted.

Dismissing the subject from his mind with a half suppressed sigh, his thoughts reverted to Viola. Did he verily believe that after so persevering a rejection of his suit, she had lent her smiles to the courtly cavaliers whose homage would scarcely be offered in earnest.

“No,” said the chief to himself, “I fear no such competitors; but why do I speak of fear? Hope is dead within my heart—I can only pray that he who wins may be worthy of her—and yet none can prize the treasure of her love as I would have done; to me she was as a guardian spirit chasing

each thought of evil from the region of her presence. How fair she was my memory recalls but too well—her noble courage too, so unmindful of self in the midst of danger and trial—and then her gentle pity, with which she strove to heal the wound she had made—although to me it was worse torture than the haughtiest scorn—her sweet nature and filial piety—but wherefore do I cite a catalogue of virtues that only serve to set my bosom in a flame. How it chanced that she quitted me so thanklessly I shall never know—perhaps she deemed me rough and hasty of mood, and guessed that at the last moment I should oppose myself to the severance—there she judged me untruly—I would not have done her displeasure to gain a kingdom—though night and day I repeat that I love her still.”

His meditations were cut short, at this point, by Dalton's return; he advanced at a hurried pace, and grasped his friend's hand.

“It may be wise,” said he, “to part at

once, for Ralph there assures me that as I left you he spied a man stealing through the maze of trees, evidently on the watch."

"Mayhap it is a tale of the fellow's own invention, if it jumps with his humour to shorten our conference."

"Not so; he has too much sagacity to attempt to deceive on such a point."

"The spy must be a bold one who tracks my path; I am not wont to watch for such vermin, but when I see them—"

"Look yonder then," said Dalton, "behind the horses, on the right."

The Borderer did so, and plainly enough he descried, in the direction named, a single human form moving rapidly through the trees, and pushing aside the intersecting branches with a careless haste which, whatever might have been the previous motive for espial, denoted that there was no longer a thought of concealment.

"'Tis but a priest," cried the Chief, as the distant object became more distinctly

visible; "his business cannot lie with us, and we have taken alarm for nought."

"Make not too sure. Ha! as I live, 'tis Father Hubert! His suspicions, already on the alert, have led him to dodge my steps. Quick, John Heron, mount your horse and away! Wrap your cloak more closely round you—did he discover me in conference with so well-known a royalist as yourself, he would make it matter of conviction against me at once."

In obedience to his friend's desire, the Chief struck off in the direction indicated, but the priest, guessing his design, had accelerated his pace, and in another minute stood direct in his path, while they were both a score of yards distant from the spot where the attendant had been left in charge of the horses. The Borderer would have strode on, but the priest grasped his cloak.

"I did not think ever to lay finger on one of your calling," said the Chief; "but since it is your will to learn a lesson not in your

breviary, I will be the teacher. Know that he who pries into the affairs of others will seldom keep a whole skin."

So saying, John Heron caught him by the waist, and displaying strength that might have uprooted a young oak-tree, he raised him from the ground, and flung him backwards with some violence.

The fall being on the greensward was not a severe one. The next instant the Border Chief had mounted his horse and was galloping away at full speed.

Father Hubert rose from the ground, pale with rage, and confronted Dalton, who had not expected so energetic a termination to the scene. Notwithstanding John Heron's endeavours to prevent a recognition, the confessor caught a momentary glimpse of his features, and although he could not have sworn to his identity, a suspicion of the truth darted through his mind.

"So, I meet you as I expected," commenced Father Hubert to Dalton, "in full

intercourse with the fiercest of our foes, doubtless confiding to him the secrets we were simple enough to permit you to share. But I prefer not my charge here; the council shall decide between us."

"Perhaps," answered the Englishman, contemptuously, "you will defer the trial until the culprit is present to defend himself—in such case your ire will have time to cool."

"Whither go you then?" enquired the priest, eagerly.

"On a secret mission from Richard of York," replied Dalton, as he vaulted lightly on his charger's back.

Baffled on all sides, Father Hubert had no alternative but to return to the fortress, and seek the key of the mystery from the Adventurer himself.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DEPARTURE.

Conscience distasteful truths may tell,
But mark the sacred lessons well,
With her, whoever lives at strife,
Loses his better friend for life.

MAG.

DEEP may be the anguish and hard the struggle of the aching heart within, while, by a stern law of enforced necessity, the machine of life goes duly on, that none

may note the grief which the sufferer would conceal from all.

How great a revolution may be effected in a few moments in the hopes of years—treasured memories to be discarded as worthless from the mind where they had been so dearly prized—and prospects painted in happy fancy's brightest hues, to be tinged henceforth with the colouring of despair—and throughout all, the beholder guesses not even that there is aught of woe hidden beneath that outward appearance of indifference.

Such an aspect, so still and calm and fair, wore Viola as, after a sleepless night, she rose at an early hour from her couch, and leaned forth from her latticed window that the matin air might cool her fevered brow. Her heart was very heavy ; but if human passion had dismissed the color from her cheek, holy purity and heaven-born strength shone in her upraised eye.

During the solitary hours of the livelong night, she had reviewed the past, until a

gradual but clear perception of the truth had been attained; she retraced her last interviews with the armourer's apprentice, his secret repinings at his lowly fortunes—his loud-tongued admiration of the beautiful and high-born guest of the Duchess of Burgundy—she called to mind that it was Father Hubert who had made known the youth's change of destination, and had indemnified her father for the loss of his services—above all she reflected how forcibly the Border Chief had dwelt on the extraordinary personal resemblance of the Adventurer to his reputed father, Edward the Fourth; the whole scheme then broke upon her, and she easily comprehended why the young artisan had been selected to personate a character which, she could not but acknowledge, became him well. It is true, the blithe, frank manner of former times, which first engaged her girlish confidence, was now converted into the perfection of princely bearing, and she marvelled much that one whose nature seemed constitution-

ally averse to duplicity, should ever have been led into a course of such sinful falsehood.

A few tears escaped from Viola's eyes as she pursued the retrospection, but they were not inspired by a weak regret at the disappointment of expectations she had privately nursed—they fell rather in gentle sorrow for another's guilt; she could not love aught unworthy, and the moment that proved to her Perkin Warbeck's baseness dethroned him from his power over her affections.

“It is too late,” she murmured, clasping her fair hands earnestly together; “it is too late to extricate him from the false position wherein he has thrust himself—how unjustifiable the imposture. To plunge a peaceful kingdom into civil war and bloodshed! in our days of happy innocence could I ever have guessed him capable of such deliberate perfidy—pride, honor, conscience, must all have been wrecked ere he attained to such a pass—Heaven have mercy on his

benighted soul!—here his doom is sealed, for truth will surely triumph, and treachery and deception be laid low—alas! for the brave and true hearts that must share his ruin! Yet I see not what can be done; did I raise my feeble voice, and denounce the impostor in the midst of his followers, who would believe me? The tale would be received with derision—the deceiver with unblushing front would proclaim me crazed—I should be laughed to scorn, and removed as an inconvenient witness from his path. Ha! I see it all now—yonder priest desires my absence, hence his earnest zeal for my spiritual welfare—an evil purpose pointing to a good end.”

And Viola inwardly determined not to follow the suggestions of Father Hubert with regard to the religious house of whose sisterhood she should become a member, although her idea of conventual seclusion remained unchanged; for had not the temptation under which Warbeck had succumbed arisen from his overweening love of

grandeur, and insatiable yearning after this world's goods and honors?

On the previous evening the maiden had acquainted her patroness with her intended removal and future destination, and Katherine, slightly displeased at so abrupt and apparently capricious a repulse of her favor, expressed no surprise, and offered no obstacle; indeed the religious supremacy exercised by the church would hardly have admitted any forcible remonstrance on such a point. Viola felt this coldness acutely, and recognized that she had lost a friend, but how could it be otherwise? what confidence or sympathy could exist between her and the loving wife who esteemed and honored the descendent of princes in the base-born impostor.

The time drew nigh for Viola's departure, which, by the contrivance of Father Hubert had been fixed at an hour so early that it was scarcely probable any of the inmates of the fortress should be astir. Having completed her preparations, the maiden

quitted her chamber, and ascended to the platform, from whence she might easily observe when her litter and escort should be in readiness.

Although so enthusiastic an admirer of nature, her eye, while it appeared to rove over the fair prospect before her, noted not its beauties; deeply absorbed in her own thoughts, she did not at first remark that she was not alone. Half leaning over the giddy parapet, his head buried in his hands was the young Adventurer. His whole attitude exhibited an air of extreme despondency. When the sight of him arrested Viola's eye, with a slight shudder, she made a movement to withdraw, but there was something in his appearance so little consonant with the character of a triumphant deceiver that she presently changed her intention, and advancing towards him murmured in a low and tremulous voice—

“Perkin Warbeck.”

Years had rolled by since that name last rung on the Adventurer's ear, and now soft

as was the tone in which it was pronounced, the sound reverberated like thunder through his brain—to him it seemed the cry of an accusing spirit, summoning him to the seat of judgment.

Starting from his bending position, he turned round, and faced the maiden, who was scarcely less agitated than himself.

“What mean you?” he asked, with choked utterance. “Whom do you seek?”

“Perkin Warbeck,” answered Viola, resuming her self-possession, “deception with me can no longer avail you—I know you now—I had misgivings from the first moment I beheld you, and circumstances you wot not of, have changed doubt into certainty—I did not seek this meeting, but would not shun it.”

“By the memory of the past!” exclaimed the Adventurer, eagerly.

“Recal it not—it affords not one link of sympathy with the present—how immeasurably different in my esteem stands

my father's honest apprentice, and the tricked out actor, the lying impostor whose own hearth is a witness of his hourly deceit—And this noble lady, the wife you have so cruelly wronged—oh most foul dishonor! what knight, soldier, or gentleman, would not burn with indignation to list such a tale of infamy? the veriest beggar that lacks wherewithal to subsist would not purchase it at such a price—he who could play so base a part must indeed have lost all sense of natural right, all fear of Heaven's avenging justice. Oh! Perkin Warbeck—a week ago, and I had laid down life ere I could have believed you were such a man.”

The Adventurer turned aside his face, crimsoned with shame, and groaned aloud.

Moved by these indications of sensibility, Viola drew closer towards him, and continued in a milder strain—

“You are not happy—notwithstanding your long course of guilt you are not yet

quite hardened to the voice of conscience—in the field, at the banquet, remorse is ever busy in your breast, is it not so? You cannot deny that you regret the past—you repent—say I not truly—and you will repair. There can be no triumph in ill-gotten victories—no honour in respect that is paid to the image of another in your person. A true heart only can be light and joyous. You have felt this often, Warbeck, and will do what you may in reparation of your sin—you will discard the splendour, pomp and dignity to which you have no title; you will end this unnatural rebellion, and relinquish—”

She paused, for the young man shook his head mournfully, and sighed as he repeated—

“It cannot be, but if ever I reach the throne; my deeds of charity, shall cancel, if possible, my errors in the sight of heaven, and I swear that the weal of England shall be my first and most devoted charge.”

“Speak not of that. So great an injustice will not be permitted. An enterprise founded on falsehood, and supported by deception, will end in signal failure, in the ruin of your trusting followers, and your own destruction.”

“Should the scaffold be my portion, I shall know that my doom is not ill-deserved, and shall bow to my fate without repining.”

“I may not tarry,” said the maiden, hurriedly, for a glance at the court beneath showed her that her litter was in readiness, and Father Hubert was evidently impatient at her absence, and seemed to be despatching a messenger to seek her. “Yet hearken for a moment—when you have lost all hope of bringing this most unholy plot to successful issue—when further bloodshed will be needless cruelty, and can no longer serve the purposes of unlawful ambition—then, for the sake of your own soul, for the re-establishment of peace in the kingdom you have invaded, for the enabling of your

followers to win pardon by submission with a safe conscience—I do conjure you to avow your deception, that the minds of men may no more find cause of contention in the support of your pretended rights. Will you swear to do this?"

The young man was about to comply, when a sudden recollection seized him, he drew back, and a single word faltered from his tongue—it was the name of his ill-fated wife.

At this instant, the steps and voices of the persons in search of Viola, were distinctly heard ascending to the platform—the maiden awaited not their coming; but without looking again at her companion, she sprang down the narrow flight of stairs and disappeared from view. No attempt was made to detain her by Richard, as we shall still call the Adventurer, in preference to his original appellation of Perkin Warbeck.

The litter that conveyed Viola Hather-ton from the Heron's Haunt, had scarcely

wound out of sight, when Father Hubert, who, during the previous evening, had not succeeded in obtaining a private interview with the Pretender, sought him in his chamber—notwithstanding the earliness of the hour, Richard was not to be found there; and as many things demanded his immediate attention, the Lady Katherine, in some surprise at his continued absence, proceeded in quest of him.

Having traversed, in vain, hall, fore-court, and guard-room, the young wife mounted to the top of the keep—there she found her lord, but with eye so haggard, and lip so blanched, that he was barely to be recognized.

“You are suffering, surely?” exclaimed Katherine, as she flew towards him.

He shook his head in denial.

“You have had but too little rest of late—and even while you sleep your dreams are troubled. Nay, be not affrighted, my dear lord, you speak not in your slumbers, or I might, perchance, get hearing of

your secrets, and find good cause of jealousy."

As she spoke, she looked up in her husband's face with a confiding smile—he returned it faintly.

"Traitor," said he, "You know, too well, that my heart, with its faults and follies, is all your own."

"But your illness, has it passed away? Methinks, you are still pale."

"A sudden pang—nothing—I am nigh weary of the strife and petty dissensions of the restless spirits that surround us. These cares, sweetheart, hang heavy on my mind. Say, my Kate, could you be content to renounce our claims to pomp and dominion, and share a lowlier lot than that to which you are entitled, with one whose first thought, and only wish, would be to see you happy?"

Katherine paused before she replied—at length, raising her sweet eyes from the ground, she said, with much earnestness—

“ You do but jest, my lord, to prove my constancy. Yet will I answer you, and say that I should not be content to know your birthright passing from you without a struggle to maintain it. ’Twould grieve me sorely to see your life wear away in obscurity and ignoble ease, when it should be devoted to higher and loftier purposes. Foul disgrace would it be to your ancestry that the last scion of their line should bear so poor a heart—posterity, hereafter, would have a right to condemn. I am not ambitious for myself, but for you, I covet high estate and an exalted sphere, to show that my Richard is a worthy Plantagenet. No! my good Lord, a craven pilot is he who deserts the helm when the storm blows the loudest—you must not disappoint the expectations of an oppressed people—you cannot withdraw from the post which heaven has assigned you.”

“ Enough, Kate!” returned the Adventurer, gravely. “ Be it as you will. My mind is now fixed as firmly as you could

desire—we will never speak again of the abandonment of our rights.”

The subject was not renewed; and, after a short discourse on other matters, Katherine acquainted her husband that Father Hubert had already sought an audience. The request could not be denied, and, distasteful as these conferences with his wily confederate had become, Richard descended to his privy chamber to meet him.

Ignorant of the Pretender's interview with Viola Hatherton, the priest recounted the circumstances of her departure, and bade him no longer feel any uneasiness on the score of detection. To this Richard replied not, for he entertained a certain and undefined dread that if the confessor guessed the damsel knew their secret, he would not hesitate to practise any violent measures to prevent its betrayal.

Father Hubert then spoke of his meeting with Dalton, and his firm conviction that he had found the Englishman in private conference with the Border Chief, and he demanded

if it were indeed true that he had received commission from Richard to proceed towards the south. This statement the Adventurer could not deny, although he exhibited no small surprise that his permission had been so promptly acted on; still he maintained, with warmth, his opinion that Dalton was no traitor—as no absolute proof of his guilt could be afforded, the matter was at length allowed to drop.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PACKET.

While these faint proofs he told and pressed,
Hope seemed to kindle in his breast;
Though inconsistent, vague and vain,
It warped his judgment and his brain.

SCOTT.

ON the following morning, a few miles from the Heron's Haunt there was enacted a scene of violence and blood, only too frequent at that period, when the strong arm of might was wont to avenge its own quarrels, or as

it might be, to remove a witness whose silence could not be purchased by other means.

Around a gnarled, thickset tree, to whose topmost branch a rope was attached, stood a small company of Burgundian men-at-arms, evidently assembled for the purpose of executing summary justice.

Surrounded by the soldiers, seated on the ground, was the prisoner; his hands were tied behind him, he was an old man, so old indeed that it seemed unnecessary cruelty to abridge the span which in the natural course of things must so soon have terminated—his scant white hairs blew about in the wind, and his abject countenance, seamed with wrinkles, spoke of suffering and privation. Extreme fear or sullen apathy had silenced his lamentations, but yet a close observer would have noted that as he sat, his chin resting on his knees, his keen eyes undimmed by age, wandered hurriedly to and fro, as if he entertained a hope that his sentence would not be carried

out, or that some means of averting his doom might yet be found.

This was Osbeck led to die by command of Father Hubert—whose influence over the Burgundians was very considerable—the crime imputed to the prisoner was the supposed connection with the depredators of the district, and his refusal to make known the lurking place of his associates; the real plunderers had been let loose on consideration they should swear to the old man's guilt; the deed was to be committed under the semblance of authority, the priest having made use of the Adventurer's signet-ring, while he was not even acquainted with the Fleming's detention.

The soldiers were awaiting the arrival of their captain before they proceeded to the execution of their duty; their march had been so speedy that they had reached the spot appointed a few minutes before the time indicated. Gaily they laughed and chatted, heedless that the life of a fellow-creature was hanging on the brink of eter-

nity; trained from their youth to war and bloodshed, they did not permit such a trifle to depress their spirits for a moment. However their mirth was, in a short space, interrupted by the appearance of an individual in the direction in which they expected their leader to arrive—a second glance soon convinced them that the person in question was no Burgundian, but a countryman clad in grey homespun, cut in such a fashion that it fitted close to his athletic form, while a large, flapping hat was pulled down over his forehead. Attracted by the novelty of the spectacle, he approached the party, and called out in some surprise :

“Hallo! my masters, what is it ye purpose? Our English oaks are not accustomed to bear such acorns—what offence has been done?”

One of the Burgundians who chanced to have obtained some knowledge of the English tongue, here explained that the prisoner was a freebooter, condemned to

death for sundry merciless outrages and other crimes of magnitude; at the same time the new-comer was advised to move off, and neither make nor meddle in that which did not concern him. Perceiving the inutility of contending the point, and nothing doubting the justice of the sentence, although its legality would have been more difficult to prove, the stranger was about to turn away, when Osbeck sprang from the ground, and in a discordant voice almost amounting to a shriek, with irrepressible volubility he poured forth his supplications to be permitted to speak a few words to the countryman, solemnly declaring that his communication would only bear relation to his private affairs.

The Burgundian soldier to whom the appeal was made, was young in years and service, by nature less harsh and stern than his fellows, and could not resist the urgency of these entreaties—turning to his comrades, he interpreted the captive's wish, and added, that for his own part he could see no harm

in granting the desire, especially as he would pledge himself to have a care that no rescue should be attempted, or any means of escape contrived. After some demur the others acceded, and the countryman was allowed to advance to Osbeck's side. The old man's senses seemed now to have returned to him as vividly as ever, he threw off his air of torpor, and his face assumed the shrewd, crafty, intelligent expression it habitually wore in former times.

"Make good use of your time, friend," exclaimed the countryman, "for I guess by the look of these gentry they will not permit too long a respite."

"You will not refuse to perform the last request of a man whose moments are numbered?" said the prisoner, earnestly.

"I will swear to do your bidding, if in my power," answered the stranger.

"It will cost nought but time and trouble. You know St. Cuthbert's stone, as it is called in these parts; buried among the heap of ruins, under a half broken stone

you will find a sealed packet, it is addressed to my poor daughter's boy."

"I will not fail to place it in his hands," said the countryman. "Where shall I find him?"

"Ha! there is the grief that has filled my cup with bitterness—I have never even seen him—he was torn from his mother when an infant—years have I wasted in quest of him, and now when I have got some clue, by which I could discover him, I shall not live to follow it out."

"Give me what information you can, and I will warrant to discover your kinsman."

"It is now two years ago since I heard, that bearing the name of Perkin Warbeck, he was apprentice with the armourer of Saint Evert, one Nicholas Hatherton—"

Here the stranger started violently—small marvel was it, for beneath the countryman's grey doublet beat the bold heart of the Border Chief.

"The man you mention is dead," said

John Heron. "But say what you would have me to do, for the time passes quickly away."

"The armourer hath left a daughter—by all you hold sacred, I would charge you to seek her out; surely she will be able to furnish you with some traces of the boy after he left her father's service—should you ever succeed in finding him, deliver to him the sealed packet, it will teach him his birth and parentage, and place him, in my own country, in possession of wealth sufficient to spare his young days from labour—it should have been my child's portion; notwithstanding my strong necessity I have never touched it but hoarded it for her boy—bid him not waste the gold, for it was hardly earned."

"I will not fail to fulfil your mission," answered the Borderer, "but is your own fate irrevocably fixed? Can nothing be done for yourself?"

"Nothing. But he may yet relent.

At times I believe these preparations for death are but a jest—I never did evil to him or his—but I would not give him my secret, for I trow he was plotting mischief to the boy—otherwise why should he care to know that which concerned him not?—Well! he may work his will on this shrivelled carcase, ere my tongue let slip aught that might injure my daughter's child."

"Then you are guiltless of the crime of plundering and reiving with which you are charged?" asked the Chief.

"Ha! ha! your wit must halt strangely, my friend, if you think that these feeble hands could rend the spoil from the strong. No, many sins have been mine, but open violence has never been my trade. My coin was all made by fair dealing, good sir—men might curse the money-lender as his coffers grew full, yet they spoke him humbly enough in the hour of need—'twas a thriving craft, but I had small comfort in't."

“Who is it that has adjudged you to death, and would fain possess your secret?” inquired the Chief.

The question for ever remained unanswered, for at that moment the sound of a horse's hoofs was heard on the smooth turf, and the Burgundian soldiers, fearing the displeasure of their captain, roughly seized the Borderer's arm, and impelled him from the circle—he had barely time to assure Osbeck that his wishes should be faithfully fulfilled, and then he strode onwards, well pleased to escape examination on his own score.

The Chief more than half suspected that the supposed culprit was about to suffer as the victim of private vengeance, but he was aware that his single arm could be of no avail, and therefore speedily dismissed the subject from his mind. Not so the mission with which he had charged himself; his steps were soon turned in the direction of Saint Cuthbert's stone, while his mind dwelt with much complacency on

the necessity of his seeking Viola Hather-ton once more. Ignorant of the maiden's sudden departure from the Heron's Haunt, he was mentally occupied in devising a hundred expedients for obtaining a private interview.

Having, at length, reached Saint Cuthbert's stone, a hugh pyramid composed of masses of granite, he raised the centre stone, which had been described as partly broken, and having loosened the earth beneath it, he drew forth the sealed packet, which he deposited heedfully in his doublet, fully resolved, at some future period, to place it in the hands of Osbeck's grandson.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE EXECUTION.

Allow him not a parting word ;
Short be the shrift, and sure the cord !
Then let the gory head appal
Marauders from the castle wall.

SCOTT.

WEARY alike of his own reflections, and the tender solicitude of his young wife—which, at times, pierced him to the heart, the Adventurer mounted his high-mettled steed, and accompanied only by Maurice

Vipont, as an attendant, he galloped along mountain path and lowland plain with a speed which seemed intended to outfly thought.

The company of the frank young partisan was held in peculiar esteem, since he was not one to watch the changes that clouded his leader's brow, or note the inequality of manner that was occasionally too perceptible.

Any unusual depression of spirits exhibited by the Pretender, was attributed by Vipont to his early misfortunes, the loss of kindred, and the isolated position in which he had been reared.

Although Richard did his utmost to struggle against the shame and bitter remorse consequent on his course of continual duplicity, he was not always able to obtain sufficient mastery over such feelings to enable him to conceal them from his followers. Hence, on occasions when anything weighed peculiarly on his mind, the attendance of Maurice Vipont was always acceptable

since, in his presence, he could indulge the humour of the moment uncontroled.

An additional gloom had oppressed him since the recognition of Viola Hatherton—it was not that he apprehended her testimony would be brought forward to convict him, but it had engendered a restless uneasiness which rendered almost every one an object of suspicion.

Moreover, the meeting with the armourer's daughter had recalled his former estate most forcibly to his recollection; and he sighed deeply as he reflected that he should have been far happier as the humble artisan than the occupant of a station, whose dangers were his own, while its honors could only be maintained by perjury and deceit.

As he thus pursued his sad ruminations, his eye fell, by chance, on his young follower, as he made his steed bound and caracole in very lightness of heart, and pure enjoyment of the sunny hour.

“You are blithe as the morn,” said Rich-

ard, smiling faintly at the youth's gay mood. "Is it ever thus with you? Have you never felt a weariness of spirit that makes life a burden with its constant toil and strife?"

"May it please you, my lord," answered Vipont, "with a good horse beneath me, and a bright sky above, I would not change lots with the king on his throne, saving your Grace's presence. I have never yet known a serious care."

"Most happy ignorance!" exclaimed the Pretender, "long may you retain it. And that it may be so, keep a clear conscience—let none tempt you from the path of truth, and think not that one error from rectitude may be lightly amended."

"I fear, my lord," answered Vipont, "the course you recommend will not drive grief from the breast, for does it not weigh heavy on your Grace who is all nobleness and honour?"

The Pretender gazed keenly on the youth; but the latter's open, confiding ex-

pression of countenance evinced that he spoke but as he felt.

"I meant not—thought not of myself," said Richard, hurriedly; "I am no rule for others. Marked out by fate for a peculiar lot, without the power to guide or change it."

And he relapsed into thought.

The horsemen had approached a spot where the road suddenly descended from the rocky territory to the more open country, expanding from a mere bridle-path into a commodious, well-beaten track—a shelving bank fringed with alders and gorse formed a boundary that restricted the view within a very narrow compass, and when they emerged from its overhanging shade, an exclamation of surprise burst from the lips of Maurice Vipont, as he glanced around.

"There is mischief in the wind," he cried to his unobservant companion, whose eyes were scarcely raised from the ground;

in another moment a loud discordant shriek rang through the air.

At some distance from our horsemen a group of soldiers were collected round a prisoner, who was making frantic efforts to escape from their hands, and from whom the cry, above described, had proceeded.

“By my honour!” exclaimed Richard; “yonder men belong to our foreign mercenaries. Prick forward, Vipont, and learn if they have warrant for what they do.”

With the speed of a winged arrow the youth galloped to the tree before which the Burgundians had assembled; their captain had already arrived, and the rope had been placed round the neck of the unhappy Osbeck.

The required explanation was soon given, and the hearer felt little pity for the culprit when he heard the crime imputed to him, as the orders of their council were most strict for the punishment of of-

fences of this description, lest the cause of the Adventurer should be connected, in the minds of the peasantry, with oppression and outrage.

"It might not be amiss," said the Adventurer, when he received the report of his follower, "to enquire further into this matter, although I doubt not that the caitiff is justly adjudged."

"I fear, my lord, we shall be too late," replied Maurice Vipont, "for the poor wretch was already in the noose."

Setting spurs to their steeds, they both proceeded to the scene of action.

The unhappy Osbeck had ceased to resist the will of his captors, he struggled no longer against his fate, and his piercing outcries had subsided into a low, wailing moan—ever and anon he glanced wildly round the circle, as though he still retained a faint expectation that at the last moment a reprieve might be brought forward.

Meantime the rope had been adjusted

by means of a pulley, according to the directions of the Burgundian captain, so that the hapless victim might be swung up into mid air, and plunged into eternity without the possibility of any error in the execution of the sentence. When the cord was placed round the prisoner's neck, his hands were unbound, and he was carried rather than led to the spot where he was stand.

Precisely at this juncture the Adventurer and his companion advanced to the front of the tree, and drew the rein at a short distance from the soldier band. Imagining that their appearance boded some interruption to the performance of the duty to which he had pledged himself, the Burgundian leader hurriedly gave the signal for the death of Osbeck.

The old man had heard the footfall of the horses, and raised his eyes wistfully towards the new comers, thinking that the priest had at last relented. A perplexed look passed over the captive's countenance

as he gazed on Richard, and he cried wildly—

“Who are you that come here with the aspect of my dead child? Speak—if you be not a spirit sent to save or warn me!”

At this instant, in obedience to a gesture from the captain, the rope was drawn sharply to its full extremity, and immediately the body of Osbeck swung high into the air, despite his frenzied resistance.

“I cannot die until I have seen the boy,” he exclaimed, with a yell scarcely human. “Where is he? Perkin Warbeck, I call on you to appear!”

Osbeck then vainly endeavoured to insert one hand between the cord and his throat, while with the other he madly tried to obtain some hold of the branch above his head—the damp moisture rolled from his forehead, and his eyes, bursting from their sockets, were fixed upon the Adventurer, who, struck with astonishment at hearing himself thus invoked by the name he formerly bore, sat his horse immoveable as

though cut out of stone, while he returned the old man's straining glance with one of mingled amazement and horror—thus did these two gaze on each other for some moments—and then with a piercing shriek which resounded long after in the ears of the bystanders, the spirit of Osbeck was launched into eternity, while his body hung suspended in the air, a swollen and livid corpse.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ALLIES.

When princes meet, astrologers may mark it
An ominous conjunction, full of boding,
Like that of Mars with Saturn.

OLD PLAY.

WHILE the Pretender's small host remained in undisturbed possession of the Heron's Haunt, James of Scotland had continued his onward march, and sacked and razed to the ground several fortresses of little note,

carrying off considerable booty. However, when it became a matter of certainty that the Earl of Surrey was on his progress northward at the head of an overwhelming force, the Scottish army gradually retreated towards the Borders, and their final destination became a subject of anxious speculation. Without unfolding his intentions to any one, James had appointed a meeting with his young ally at a spot equi-distant from their respective camps.

At the time indicated, a magnificent tent of considerable size was pitched for the accommodation of the royal party. Large was the gathering of knights and nobles in its outer compartment, and much grave solicitude might be read on every countenance, for intelligence of a most unpleasing nature had just transpired. Sir William Stanley, Chancellor of England, who had hitherto appeared to enjoy the full confidence of his master, Henry VII., had, it may be remembered, received overtures from the Yorkists, to which he had listened

with no unfavourable ear—at least, if the terms proposed had not been accepted, they had not been rejected with that prompt decision which a loyal subject would have displayed—still the negotiation had been carried on so privily, and with such extreme caution, that it might have been expected to defy detection—universal then was the consternation when Sir William Stanley was suddenly seized, imprisoned, and beheaded with scarcely more than the form of trial. So abrupt had been the proceeding, that it struck awe and dismay into the minds of many, who had certainly committed themselves to an equal extent with the sufferer—and numerous were the accusations of treachery bandied about among the partisans of York.

There were very few who were acquainted with the fact, that the papers carried off from Holyrood-house by the Bastard Heron were quite sufficient to arouse the distrust of a less suspicious monarch than Henry Tudor.

It is possible also he had other means of espial still more difficult to trace.

The death of Sir William Stanley on the scaffold had spread a marked gloom over the spirits of all parties, and it was evident that the determined energy exhibited by the English King, had dealt a decided blow to the Adventurer's cause.

King James had already found annoyance from the continual remonstrances of the pretender, on account of the small regard paid to the lives and property of the unre-sisting English peasantry by the northern troops—the petty irregularations arising thence had afterwards been aggravated into a more fixed resentment by the impunity afforded to the Bastard Heron in the surrender of the Heron's Haunt—this neglect of his wishes appeared to the sovereign not only a mark of disrespect, but a signal proof of ingratitude on the part of one to whom he had dealt out benefits with so lavish a hand. On the other side, the Pretender

felt aggrieved that his constant representations were so completely disregarded—such were the feelings with which the allies met once more.

Their interview was not public, since a certain portion of the tent had been set apart for this purpose—it was, however, on this occasion that, in answer to the Adventurer's remonstrances in behalf of his father's subjects, King James ironically commended the Prince of York's tender consideration for a people who showed so little disposition to acknowledge his claims.

The meeting terminated without satisfaction to either party, and indeed, although an amicable appearance was outwardly preserved, from that moment James took no further interest in the cause he had risked so much to serve.

While the conference lasted, such of the Scottish knights who had formed a part of the Pretender's host, seized the opportunity to discourse with their countrymen, on the

events that had taken place during their separation.

The Douglas alone held himself aloof, foreseeing that in consequence of the disgust recently conceived by his king, the enterprise would shortly be abandoned, he maintained a moody silence, far too haughty to display to others the displeasure that smouldered in his own bosom.

Meantime, the Earl of Huntly moved through the excited throng, answering to the queries of all with his usual noble courtesy. He particularly distinguished by his notice his ward, Sir Ronald Graham, who happily escaped the royal observation and censure on account of the Border Chief's release. The young cavalier had ever been a favourite with the Earl, under whose eye he had been trained to arms, and had attained his present promising manhood—with him Huntly now conversed on the topic most dear to the father's heart—the welfare of his peerless Katherine.

“And so, my bonny bird pines not to have left her native skies?” he enquired eagerly. “She is well, boy, and her spirit as gay as ever? You know what I would ask; does the helpmate bestowed on her by our sovereign value the treasure given to his keeping?”

“The Lady Katherine’s beauty is still the theme of every lip,” answered Sir Ronald in a subdued tone; “and I wot not that she has found reason to repent her lot.”

“That at least is well,” said the Earl, “for she will need consolation and support in the dangers and trials that are impending. Evil tongues have been at work to foment ill-will between my daughter’s husband and our noble Liege, and small chance has the Prince of York to regain his inheritance without the aid of the Scots. He has been indiscreet throughout. Think you he might be brought to avow some regret for his sanction of the Bastard Heron’s escape?”

“Who could ever teach the pride of these Plantagenets to stop?” exclaimed Graham. “Moreover, he has advisers enow, and each one bears a different mind.”

“Is it so?” returned Huntly; “then the case is indeed without remedy; but look ye, the ushers raise the curtain, and here comes the King.”

As the Earl spoke, James advanced into the outer division of the tent: there was an angry flush on his brow, but long practice had enabled him to govern the impetuous spirit within, and he contrived to preserve an air of indifferent composure.

He was shortly followed by the Adventurer; the latter was grave and thoughtful, but his princely bearing was still conspicuous as he greeted former friends, who found it a matter of necessity to show a changed countenance where their monarch's frown had fallen.

King James then briefly addressed the captains of his host, and made known his purpose of leading back his troops to

their native land, since enough had been done in reprisal of the insults and aggressions formerly received from the English; the proposed retreat was announced to be in consequence of the mutual opinion of himself and Prince Richard, that the cause of the Yorkists would best be promoted by the withdrawal of the Scots; at the same time, the King granted a cold permission to such of his knights as were inclined to serve under the Adventurer's standard.

This intimation, however, did not procure the Pretender many adherents; for the nobles, observing the slight favour in which he was held, did not care to testify too strong an interest for one who had given displeasure to their sovereign.

The Earl of Douglas felt most keenly the disgrace of retreating in the face of Surrey's English troops, whose numerical superiority, inspired him with so little dread; but recognizing the impossibility of averting such a proceeding, and heeding

nought the maintenance of the rights of the White Rose, he submitted to what had been decreed in mute indignation.

The Earl of Huntly alone, impelled by a parent's apprehensive solicitude, entreated his Liege's acquiescence in allowing some part of his followers to remain with Richard of York—the request was complied with; and then the father besought Sir Ronald Graham to retain the captainship of his little band.

“In circumstances of peril that we cannot foresee,” said the Earl, eagerly; “my child may need a protector—she cannot confide in another as she would do in the friend of her youth. It will cheer me, at least, to know you by her side—you will not neglect this charge?”

“I will hold her safety far dearer than life,” answered Sir Ronald, fervently, as he accepted the trust offered to him.

The King separated from his former ally with every outward demonstration of courtesy; but as the Adventurer rode back to

return to his quarters at the Heron's Haunt—it was evident to every mind that he had nothing further to expect from James Stuart.

No sooner had the Monarch re-entered Scotland, than he despatched messengers to his kinswoman, the Lady Katherine, counselling her to abide under his guardianship, and offering her a munificent maintenance in Holyrood House, while her lord pursued his operations against the English. Katherine's answer was such as might have been expected.

“Come weal or woe,” said she, “my duty and wishes alike place me at my husband's side—his joys will be doubled by my presence, and his adversity I trust to cheer—with a thankful heart to my Lord the King, I am well content with the lot which his Grace formerly assigned me.”

And as the Adventurer pressed her passionately to his breast—happily for her she did not read in that wild caress the secret

remorse and self-reproaches that poisoned every lawful enjoyment.

His young wife's tenderness and deep devotion—the sacrifice of all other ties which she made so willingly in his behalf—all this, which would have afforded matter of triumph, had he really been what he assumed to be, did now but aggravate his dejection.

Her increased deference to his desires as his fortunes seemed less prosperous—every token that she exhibited of a noble mind and elevated feeling, served to show how repugnant to her would be any species of deception.

“Would that I had never been tempted to quit the humble path wherein you found me,” said the Adventurer, gloomily to Father Hubert, as they discoursed privately together. “Then, if an object of scorn to others, I should not have been thus dishonored in my own esteem.”

“Had you acted as you say,” returned

the priest, "and continued your life of patient drudgery, your noble bride would have been wedded to another lord, and you would have been, in her sight, but as a clod of earth beneath her feet."

"Better far, that we had never met, than that I should have done her this grievous wrong; 'tis madness to know that she loves not me as I am; her soul's worship is for some high born hero, in whom she reverences her husband."

"The Lady Katherine," said the confessor, "will yet have reason to rejoice in her fate, when its partner has encircled her fair brows with a diadem; your wife is proud as becomes her race, she has ambition as well as love, and the time may come when you will minister to both."

"It is bootless to think on't," answered the young man petulantly, "I apprehend that our enterprise will never be brought to fortunate issue; now that we have lost the succour of our powerful ally, the cause seems to be hopeless."

Perhaps the priest recollected how he had predicted such an event, and how completely his remonstrances had been disregarded; however this might be, he had the policy to avoid any allusion to former occurrences, and said encouragingly :

“Keep a good heart, my son—who can say what will be the result of a change, that at the present moment appears to be a calamity—the stout English yeomen may rally with greater confidence round your standard, when it is no longer unfurled beside that of their hereditary foes. Moreover I have advices from Cornwall and Devon that the minds of men are in a state of ferment, owing to the levy of a new tax, which Henry Tudor's grasping avarice will rather risk his crown than abandon. These are brave tidings for us, and I expect much good effect therefrom.”

With assurances like these, Father Hubert endeavoured to raise the drooping energies of his associate; however, notwithstanding the hopes thus held out, the Earl

of Surrey's approach at the head of an overpowering force shortly caused the Adventurer to evacuate the fortress of the Heron's Haunt, and with diminished spirits and ignominious speed, his little host was compelled to recross the Borders.

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